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**BARK-CLOTH OF THE BAGANDA PEOPLE OF SOUTHERN
UGANDA: A RECORD OF CONTINUITY AND CHANGE FROM
THE LATE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY TO THE EARLY TWENTY-
FIRST CENTURY**

A Thesis Submitted to Middlesex University

In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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2005

BARK-CLOTH OF THE BAGANDA PEOPLE OF SOUTHERN
UGANDA: A RECORD OF CONTINUITY AND CHANGE FROM THE
LATE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY TO THE EARLY TWENTY-FIRST
CENTURY

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By

Venny Nakazibwe

To all my family and friends who have supported me throughout my studies and to my most beloved brothers Herman Kyeyune and Charles Lwanga Mbaziira, and my sister Jane Francis Nakyeyune who did not live long enough to share our success. You will always be remembered.

ABSTRACT

Despite the increased interest in the study of the history of African textiles since the last quarter of the past century, less attention has been paid to the study of bark-cloth, a fabric design tradition that predates the technology of weaving. Made by way of stripping, scraping and beating the inner bark of certain plants, most commonly the *figus* species, bark-cloth served various socio-cultural functions among different ethnic communities in Africa, Southeast Asia, South America, and in the Polynesian islands of the Southern Pacific. This study examines the notion of continuity and change in the role and meaning of bark-cloth of the Baganda people of the kingdom of Buganda in southern Uganda, in East Africa, from the late eighteenth-century to the early twenty-first century. Used in various forms, including among others, as a shroud, and during the investiture of the heir to the throne, and to the heads of the independent family units, bark-cloth has continued to serve as a connecting thread between the past and present generations of the Baganda society.

However, the study also reveals that the role and meaning of bark-cloth of the Baganda is no longer confined within the cultural boundaries; other factors have come into play since the mid nineteenth-century when the external (non-African) communities first infiltrated the interior of East Africa. It has been argued that the role and meaning of bark-cloth of the Baganda is in a continuous flux contingent on the dynamics of the social, economic, cultural and political structures at a given historical moment in Buganda. Hence, the study analyses the extent of Swahili-Arab influence, Western

Christianity, colonialism and education, international tourism, intra-regional and regional trade, and local politics to the redefinition of bark-cloth of the Baganda in the past almost two and half centuries. The study makes an important and necessary contribution to scholarship of the history of East African textiles and material culture.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a final horizontal stroke.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BCGA	British Cotton Growing Association
BFASS	British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society
CPA	Calico Printers Association
CMB	Coffee Marketing Board
CMS	Church Missionary Society
DIAD	Department of Industrial Arts and Design
FRSN	Field Research Support Network
FWM	Fabric Workshop and Museum
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEAC	German East Africa Company
IBEAC	Imperial British East Africa Company
KY	Kabaka Yekka
LMB	Lint Marketing Board
MTSIFA	Margaret Trowell School of Industrial & Fine Arts
MUL	Makerere University Library
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NYTIL	Nyanza Textile Industries
PMB	Produce Marketing Board
PPO	Polyphenol oxidase
TEXDA	Textile Development Agency
UAFU	Uganda African Farmers Union

UDC	Uganda Development Corporation
UJ	Uganda Journal
UNA	Uganda National Archives
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNLF	Uganda National Liberation Front
UPC	Uganda People's Congress
USSIA	Uganda Small-scale Industries Association
YBA	Young Baganda Association

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Bark-cloth, made from the inner bark of selected plant species, especially the *figus*¹, is a common fabric among several peoples in Africa, as well as in the Far East, South America, and in the Polynesian islands of the Southern Pacific. In this thesis, I examine the continuity and change in the role, design application and meaning of bark-cloth, *olubugo*, of the Baganda people of the kingdom of Buganda in central-southern Uganda (see plate 1.1), from late eighteenth-century to the early twenty-first century. Founded around the thirteenth or fourteenth-century as a result of the unification of independent clans, Buganda, the largest and most dominant kingdom in Uganda, is comprised of two major social domains namely: *abaana b'engoma* (royals), and *abakopi* (commoners). The Baganda (Muganda sing.) speak a language referred to as Luganda, and they use the term Kiganda to denote anything associated with their identity; as in Kiganda craftsmanship, Kiganda dance, Kiganda dress, and other attributions. However, scholars have often used a generic term “Ganda” to refer to the Baganda people, their language, and any other aspects relating to Buganda. Buganda is the largest producer of bark-cloth in East Africa; the Baganda have had a continuous history of bark-cloth production since the late eighteenth-century although some theories suggest that the antiquity of bark-cloth technology in Buganda stretches back to the origins of the

¹ Scientifically, *figus* species, generically known as *emituba* (sing. *omutuba*) in Luganda, language of the Baganda, belong to the Phylum Spermatophyte, Class Angiospermae, Family Moraceae and Genus *Ficus*. They can either be terrestrial (can grow from the ground) or semi-epiphytic (can start life on other plants becoming self-supporting after the death of their host). More details are given in chapter Two.

kingdom itself. Plate one illustrates the geographical location of the kingdom of Buganda, the boundaries of its counties, and the counties where the research was undertaken.

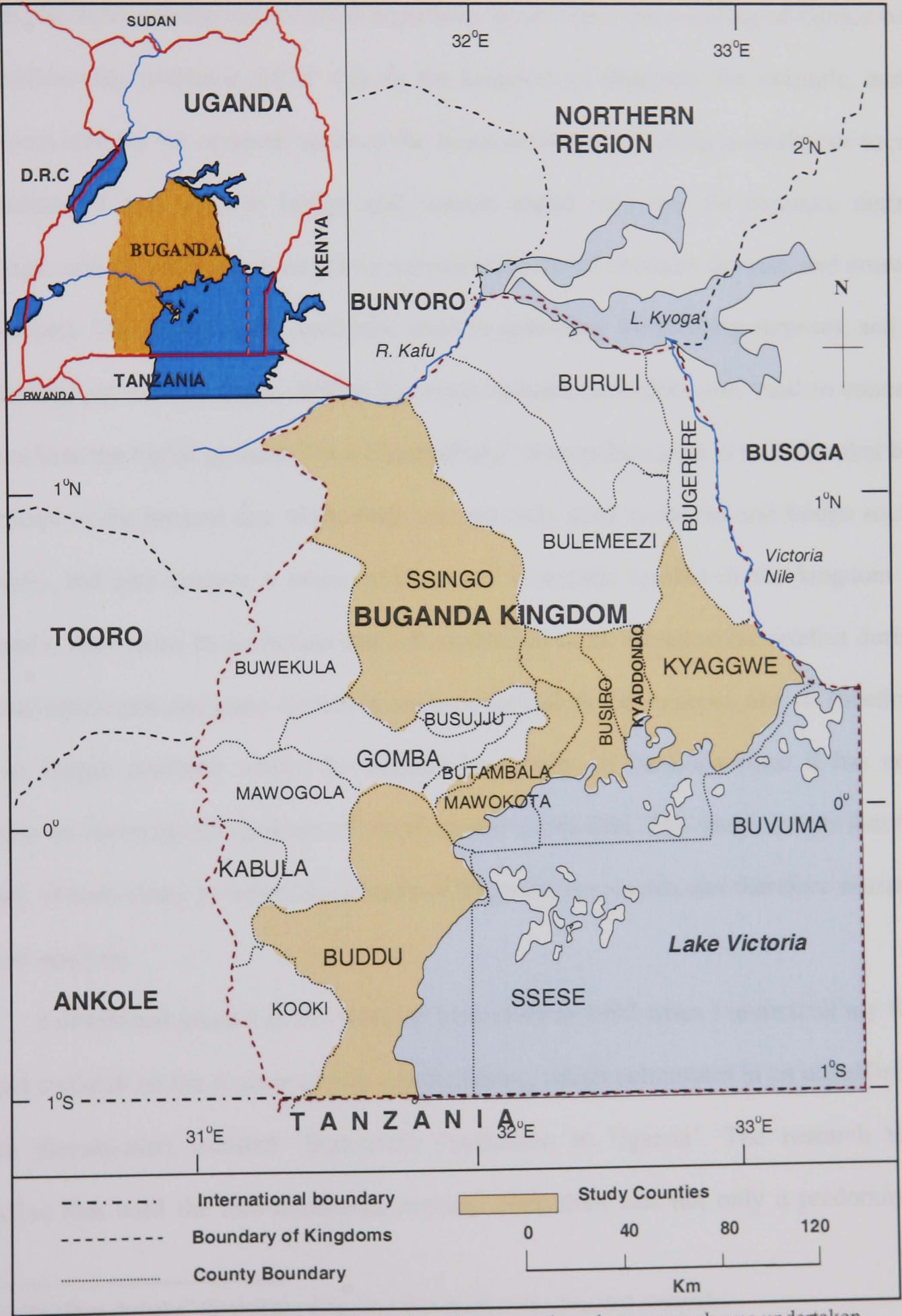


Plate 1.1 Geographical location of Buganda and the counties where research was undertaken

While bark-cloth may not be considered in the general category of textiles as John Picton and John Mack, distinguished scholars on African textiles, have noted, it served similar functions among communities especially those where the weaving of fabrics was not traditionally practised (1979: 42). In the kingdom of Buganda, for example, bark-cloth provided for the sartorial needs of the Baganda and was initially a marker of social hierarchies. It was used to bridge and cement social relations, for example during marriage; and as a shroud, it served as a connecting thread between the past and present generations. The Baganda also used bark-cloth in upholstery for bedding purposes, and in the division of interior space. Within the royal domain, bark-cloth was used to conceal and seclude the burial ground of the Bassekabaka² from public gaze, a tradition that has been kept to the present day. Bark-cloth was not only used to extend and bridge social relations, but also became a major political and economic symbol of the kingdom of Buganda. Ever since its collection and documentation as an ethnographic artefact during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, bark-cloth has evolved, and its functions are no longer confined within the cultural boundaries of Buganda since it has now become an international medium of visual artistic expression. The study reveals that the history of bark-cloth, as indeed the history of Buganda, is complex and therefore warrants critical analysis.

I developed interest in the study of bark-cloth in 1997 when I undertook my first formal research on the process of bark-cloth making, which culminated in an unpublished video documentary entitled 'Bark-cloth Production in Uganda'. The research then revealed that until the mid-nineteenth century, bark-cloth was not only a predominant

² The title "Bassekabaka" (Ssekabaka sing.) is a title given to the departed monarchs.

industry in Buganda, but it was also closely associated with all aspects of Ganda identity. Being a textile designer, and a Muganda, the lack of sufficient scholarly information on the subject, and most significantly, in relation to the changing context in the role and meaning of bark-cloth in modern times, roused my curiosity to carry out an in-depth study of bark-cloth in Buganda. It became clear to me that there is a genuine need to review the history of bark-cloth, focusing not only on its contribution to the dynamic social, political, economic and cultural history of Buganda, but also on the way the role and meaning of bark-cloth has been redefined by the change and retention of the social, political, economic and cultural structures of Buganda. It was envisaged that by consolidating the history of bark-cloth of the Baganda, at least, from the late-eighteenth century when bark-cloth became a lucrative industry and popular dress tradition of the Baganda commoners to the present, would make an important and necessary contribution to the scholarship of East African textiles and material culture, especially given the fact that the discourse of bark-cloth has not attracted much scholarly attention in the recent past.

The origins of bark-cloth are still debatable among scholars and the Baganda themselves; however, sources indicate that bark-cloth was initially a fabric of royalty (Lugira 1970:57, Reid 2002:72-73) until the second half of the eighteenth-century when it became a universal fabric of the Baganda. Kabaka (King) Ssemakookiro (c.1779-1794) is said to have made the planting of bark-cloth trees and the production of bark-cloth a mandatory activity for all Baganda men (Roscoe1911: 403). His decision thus led to the

development of an important industry that was to change the social, political and economic status of Buganda in the subsequent centuries.³

While the bark-cloth industry played an important role in the social political and economic developments in Buganda during the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries, the external contact, initially with the Swahili-Arab traders from the East African coast, around the mid-nineteenth century, opened up opportunities for the direct flow of exotic goods into Buganda. As I discuss in chapter four, this contact not only culminated in the flow of exotic goods into Buganda, but it also engendered cross-cultural relations and exchange of ideas. As I argue, the art of decorating bark-cloth with pattern and colour is an indicator of this relationship between the Baganda and the coastal Swahili-Arab traders.⁴ Although information on this subject is still very limited, I have endeavoured to open up a discussion by pointing out some of the factors that might have contributed to the appropriation of patterned bark-cloth within the royal domain, and the factors that might have constrained the survival of this design practice in Buganda. As I discuss in chapter four, the increased access to coastal trade goods, especially woven cloth, weakened the symbolic and economic value of bark-cloth. It is noteworthy that because this trade in exotic goods was initially controlled within the royal domain, it brought about change in the dress traditions of the Baganda royals, who were also the main

³ For a broader discussion on the theories relating to the origins of bark-cloth, see chapter three.

⁴ I use the term “Swahili-Arab” traders to refer to those merchants of Arab origin as well as other people of multi- ethnic background, who settled at the coast of the Indian Ocean and the off-shore islands, and engaged in long-distance trade into the interior of East Africa. Historians argue that as far back as the tenth century or probably before, there had been several waves of Arab migrations to the Eastern coast of Africa. The majority of migrants were merchants of Arab origin but also other people from Asia and the interior of East Africa settled at the coast, with a purpose of trade. As a result of their social interaction, there developed at the coast, a new social group of people of a multi-ethnic origin generally referred to as the Swahilis. Because the Swahilis and “pure” Arabs had similar names and communicated in Arabic by the time they came to Buganda, it is difficult to ascertain the true identity of the first arrivals in Buganda. Therefore, I use the term Swahili-Arabs in this research, to refer to both categories.

patrons of bark-cloth. Thenceforth, bark-cloth ceased to be a marker of social hierarchy as it was replaced with woven textiles. The body of the Buganda monarch was soon to be adorned and augmented with *tiraz* (dyed textiles and garments originally reserved for Arab rulers).

Further changes were realized with the intrusion of European missionaries and colonizers during the last quarter of the nineteenth-century. These contacts brought about political, social, cultural and economic transformations, which could not allow the bark-cloth industry to thrive in its old form. Christianity became the conduit for the dissemination of Western values, and in many cases, at the expense of indigenous traditions and values. The misconception, and in some cases, misrepresentation of ideas relating to indigenous practices and values by the European missionaries was a big factor in the transformation of the attitude of the local inhabitants about their indigenous belief systems as well as their material culture. Many aspects of local technology were thought to have “satanic” connotations, and their production and application were often discouraged. In many other parts of Sub-Saharan Africa where Christianity took root, surrendering of “satanic” practices and artefacts (depending on how each missionary interpreted the term) became a prerequisite to conversion. Several artefacts of local technology surrendered at the mission centres were openly set on fire to exemplify the everlasting fires awaiting those who would stick to “heathen practices.” Other artefacts that survived the horrendous flames ended up in Europe, sent by the missionaries to their home missions, as curious objects, to form part of the missionary and colonial exhibitions. Yet, other artefacts were confined for life in the ethnographic museums, where they serve a noble duty of educating the Westerners (and others) about the

ingenuity and cultural “primitivism” of the ethnographic “other,” to use Edward Said’s (1978) theory of “orientalism”. Bark-cloth of the Baganda can be found in several ethnographic museums around Europe and North America, though my own research on this subject was limited to the United Kingdom. On the evidence of several bark-cloth artefacts of the Baganda in the collection of the British Museum, just to give an example, it is arguable that bark-cloth was among the artefacts from the Buganda Protectorate, displayed in the Missionary Exhibitions. Registers 1956.AF.27 through 1969.AF.31 of the British Museum bear illustrations and brief notes on at least seven pieces of patterned bark-cloth presumably from Buganda, acquired from the Church Missionary Society (CMS), yet Coombes has indicated that the CMS was actively involved in the organisation of Missionary Exhibitions (1994:163-165). It should also be remembered that Buganda was an important site for the spread of Christianity in the interior of East Africa. As was the case with the coastal trade contacts, Christianity first took root within the Kabaka’s palace, the “cultural centre” of the Baganda, upon which devolved all other aspects relating to the Kiganda cultural traditions. Since the royal palace was also the depository of the highest quality bark-cloth, it is therefore not surprising that the CMS had a considerable collection of high quality bark-cloth from Buganda. Moreover, because of its ritual symbolic functions, bark-cloth was among the artefacts that were inevitably surrendered by the new converts to Christianity.

Bark-cloth also assumed other meanings as further transformations occurred in Buganda at the turn of the twentieth-century when Buganda, and later, the surrounding regions became a British Protectorate, forming the present-day Uganda. The land redistribution policies, the introduction of a hut-tax system and the mandatory cultivation

of cash crops, which were found to be of significant benefit to the British capitalistic strategies at that time, imposed further threats to the survival of the bark-cloth industry. Because of its favourable climatic conditions, Buganda became a strategic area for the production of cotton, which was the main raw material for the lucrative British textile industry. In May 1903, the colonial administration presented and considered proposals for cotton-cultivation in Buganda. A year later, several cotton species from Egypt, America and Peru were distributed to the Baganda for experimental cultivation. Among the varieties tried out, the American Black Rattler cotton specie was the most successful. Using the already established local administrative structure, cotton growing was introduced throughout Buganda and became a mandatory activity. The production of cotton and other cash crops overshadowed the indigenous industries, and by the end of the first half of the twentieth century, bark-cloth production had diminished tremendously. However, we also note that the political turbulence at the international level also had its toll on the bark-cloth industry. As indicated in chapter five, the threat posed to British interests by the German counterparts who also had a stake in the East African interior, culminated in the massive felling of bark-cloth trees in the southern counties of Buddu and Kooki, which are the main source of high quality bark-cloth in Buganda. Official records by the colonial administrators at the time indicate that more than one hundred thousand bark-cloth trees were felled for the construction of military camps and to clear the war zone, along the southern frontiers that separated the Uganda British Protectorate from the German East African territory (present-day Tanzania).⁵

⁵ J. E. Philipps letter to Chief Secretary to the Government, dated 21/1/1917. Uganda National Archives Entebbe, file A46/1512. Captain Phillips was the political officer in charge of the southern frontier of the Uganda Protectorate.

At the turn of the twentieth-century, with the introduction of Western education, modern technology and industrial products, bark-cloth ceased to be such an important cultural artefact. It came to be associated with the poor, and as such, became a symbol of economic deprivation. In chapter seven, we note the various efforts by a few missionaries to try and plough back indigenous culture into the education system, having realized the shortcomings of their counterparts who first introduced Christianity in Buganda. Margaret Trowell has been singled out and her contribution has been well analysed (Court 1985; Sanyal 2000; Kasule 2002; and Kyeyune 2003) although as it has been noted, the use of local material culture like bark-cloth was left frozen as Trowell's project focused on the development of an African aesthetic built on the foundations of Western art and religion.

Further transformation in the role of bark-cloth was realized in the 1950s as a result of constitutional adjustments proposed by Sir Andrew Cohen, the then British Governor of the Uganda Protectorate, which sparked a political crisis between the British colonial administrators and the Buganda monarchy. Complications relating to the federation of Buganda (a "Protected" State) with other regions, which also had their independent ethnic leaders, and the failure by the two parties to reach a compromise on the procedure and methods, culminated in the deposition of Kabaka Fredrick Edward Muteesa II on November 30th, 1953. In a counter-reaction by the Baganda, the cultural importance of bark-cloth was made more significant. As a way of protest, some Baganda resorted to indigenous religious practices and others expressed their political grievances through dress by reverting to bark-cloth, which had long ceased to be a sartorial material. Bark-cloth hence became a symbol of protest against colonial administration, and a sign

of allegiance to the Buganda monarchy. As Victoria L. Rovine has observed, “clothing can carry many messages in a subtle manner; it is elastic in meaning, allowing for multiple interpretations by different populations and individuals within a given community” (2001: 96). Similarly, Stuart Hall, distinguished cultural theorist of the twentieth and twenty-first century states that, “It is by our use of things, and what we say, think and feel about them – how we represent them – that we give them a meaning... it is us – in society, within human culture – who make things mean, who signify. Meanings consequently will always change, from one culture or period to another” (1997:61). When Kabaka Muteesa returned to Uganda from exile two years later, pavilions covered with bark-cloth were erected along the way from Entebbe airport to the royal palace in Mengo (approximately 30km). Field interviews have confirmed that many Baganda sported garments made out of bark-cloth, holding banners (also made out of bark-cloth) inscribed with welcome messages to their King (Musoke 2002; Lukomera 2002; Nandyose 2002). In this case, bark-cloth was used as a sign of victory of the Baganda over the British colonial administrators. The experience just described, illustrates how the Baganda themselves participated directly in the transformation of role and meaning of bark-cloth.

The idea of using cloth to communicate social or political grievances is not unique only to Buganda. “The world over”, as Victoria L. Rovine asserts, “clothing revivals have been used as a form of protest against the economic, political, and religious policies of a ruling class” (2001:100). A well-documented example of clothing revival as a tool for political resistance is Mahatma Gandhi’s movement, which sought to protect the *swadeshi* (home) industries against foreign competition. As C. A. Bayly points out,

after 1905, the Indian people became cautious of the importation of British mass-produced textiles into India because of its devastating impact on their local textile traditions. The consequence of this revelation was a national boycott of British manufactured goods, which culminated in the revival and transformation of *khadi*, locally spun and woven-cloth “from an endangered rural craft to a powerful symbol of the moral and spiritual regeneration of India” (1986: 311).⁶

As I argue in this thesis, based on social, economic, political and cultural shifts within Buganda and at the national and international level, bark-cloth of the Baganda has undergone a series of transformations in use and context, and has continuously been invested with new meaning. British colonial leadership ended in 1962, when Uganda gained independence and Kabaka Muteesa II, became the first President. However, his leadership lasted for about four years only. In 1966, Apollo Milton Obote, the Prime Minister, toppled Kabaka Muteesa II in a serious battle at the Muteesa II’s main palace of Mengo, which left many artefacts destroyed. Muteesa II fled to the United Kingdom where he died in exile three years later. In order to ensure the longevity of his political rule, Obote promulgated a new constitution by which he abolished all cultural institutions in Uganda. Since Obote’s rule, Uganda experienced different waves of political turbulence that affected directly and indirectly the production and use of bark-cloth. Despite the demise of the kingdom and the abolition of the monarchy, the aura of the “traditionality” of bark-cloth continued to linger on, however, with redefined roles and meanings. The political situation steadily deteriorated during Obote’s regime; Idi Amin Dada, relieved Obote of his presidency in a coup d’ état, but the political and economic

⁶ See also Bernad S. Cohn (1989: 343-345) and Sumit Sarkar (1973).

situation became worse than ever before. With the support of the Tanzania fraternity, Amin's dictatorial regime was toppled in 1979; Obote regained his presidential seat but was soon to face several serious political challengers. The political situation turned from bad to worse in the early 1980s culminating in a civil war that lasted for over five years.

The Buganda monarchy was revived by Yoweri Museveni, who came to power, at the end of the civil war in 1986. On 31st July 1993, Ronald Muwenda Mutebi II was crowned the thirty-sixth Kabaka of the kingdom of Buganda, an event that was characterized by extensive usage and display of bark-cloth throughout the kingdom. Since the revival of the monarchy and the coronation event, bark-cloth has once again come in the limelight of the cultural history of Buganda. The last decade, which I refer to in this study as a decade of cultural renaissance in Buganda, has propagated new ideas and methods of appropriating bark-cloth for visual expression. I focus on the various ways in which the role and meaning of bark-cloth has been extended by several artists and designers from within, and beyond the cultural and geographical boundaries of Buganda. This application of bark-cloth exemplifies the contribution of Western education to the transformation of the role and meaning of bark-cloth of the Baganda.

Further change has been facilitated by the intensification of international tourism, and mass media, which have enabled fast communication, thus leading to increased cross-cultural transfer of goods and ideas across nations. The outcome of this cross-cultural transfer of images and goods has once again helped to transform attitudes of the local community as well as that of the foreigners, in various respects, about the aesthetic and cultural relevance of bark-cloth, as has been presented in chapter nine.

1.2 Aims and Objectives of the Study

This research was undertaken with the general aim to establish how the study of such seemingly “trivial” artefacts, like textiles, and bark-cloth, can help us to articulate historical and social phenomena. However, the specific aim of the research was to carry out an in-depth study and to write a comprehensive history of bark-cloth of the Baganda. The study was designed to meet the following objectives:

1. To examine the historical cultural relevancy of bark-cloth among the Baganda.
2. To examine how the role and meaning of bark-cloth has been transformed since the late eighteenth-century until the present.
3. To analyse how the shift in the social, political, economic and cultural structures in Uganda, and specifically Buganda, has contributed to the mediation and redefinition of the role and meaning of bark-cloth in modern times.

1.3 Hypothesis and Research Questions

Research for this thesis was based on the hypothesis that the role and meaning of bark-cloth of the Baganda has continuously been transformed and reinterpreted as a result of the various shifts in the social, political, cultural and economic structures of Buganda. Hence, four key questions relating to this notion of continuity and change in the production, role and meaning of bark-cloth among the Baganda were addressed: 1) How has bark- cloth changed over time, in terms of production, application and distribution? 2) In what ways has the meaning of bark-cloth been mediated, transformed or reinforced in Buganda since the late-eighteenth century? 3) How has bark-cloth been appropriated

among artists and designers in Uganda in recent times, and in what ways has the meaning of bark-cloth been redefined? 4) What are the indicators of continuity in the historical traditions of bark-cloth in Buganda?

In order to address the above questions, I principally employed a qualitative discursive method of enquiry based on grounded ethnographic research and comprehensive review of historical documentation and archival collections on Buganda.

1.4 Conceptual Framework

Since continuity and change of the role and meaning of bark-cloth among the Baganda is dependent on the dynamics of the social, political, cultural and economic structures at various ‘historical moments’ of Buganda, the conceptual framework for this study inevitably draws from various discourses in art and design, textile history, sociology, social psychology, political science, economic history, linguistics and cultural studies. However, this theoretical framework greatly resonates with the interplay of Stuart Hall’s theoretical deployment of the term *articulation* ([1986] 1996), and Paul du Gay, Stuart Hall, Linda Janes, Hugh Mackay and Keith Negus’s ideology of the *circuit of culture* (1997). According to Hall, articulation is a way of thinking and a methodology of trying to understand a phenomenon by creating a linkage between two or more discordant elements, under certain conditions, in order to establish ‘unity’ of a discourse. Hall asserts that:

It is a linkage which is not necessary, determined, absolute and essential for all time. You have to ask, under what circumstances can a connection be forged or made? The so-called ‘unity’ of a discourse is really the articulation of different, distinct elements which can be rearticulated in different ways because they have no necessary ‘belongingness’. The ‘unity’ which matters, is a linkage between the articulated discourse and

the social forces with which it can, under certain historical conditions, but need not necessarily, be connected (1996: 141).

Relating to this articulation theory, the various distinct elements that inform the current discourse of continuity and change in the role and meaning of bark-cloth among the Baganda include: politics (local and international), religion (indigenous religions, Christianity and Islam), trade (intra-regional, regional and international), and education (indigenous and Western). Further, the recent arguments advanced by cultural theorists that, it is in a combination of processes – in their articulation - that the beginnings of an explanation about the meaning that an artefact comes to possess in the social world can be found (du Gay, Hall et al., 1997: 3) resonate with the current discourse on continuity and change in the role and meaning of bark-cloth in Buganda. In the semiotic approach, not only words and images do signify; objects themselves, can also function as signifiers in the production of meaning. Hall, states further that, “In part we give things meaning by how we use them, or integrate them into our everyday practices... In part, we give things meaning by how we represent them – the words we use about them, the stories we tell about them, the images of them we produce, the emotions we associate with them, the ways we classify and conceptualize them, the values we place on them” (1997: 3). I find Hall’s theoretical deployment of articulation and his broad views about the way *meaning* is constructed quite relevant to the current project. I therefore argue that the role and meaning of bark-cloth of the Baganda is in a continuous flux contingent on the shift in the social, economic, political and cultural structures at various ‘historical moments’ of the kingdom of Buganda.

In addition to the articulation theory, Paul du Gay, Stuart Hall, Linda Janes, Hugh Mackay and Keith Negus’s (1997) joint concept of a ‘circuit of culture’ is relevant

to my analysis of the bark-cloth artefact. According to the above scholars, there are five major cultural processes through which any analysis of a cultural text or artefact must pass “if”, as they argue, “it is to be adequately studied”. These include: *Representation, Identity, Production, Consumption and Regulation*. Because these cultural processes are interrelated, they are said to be operating along a circuit, which du Gay, Hall et al. have termed a “circuit of culture”. As they contend, in order to study an artefact culturally (in their case, they studied a Sony Walkman), “one should at least explore how it is represented, what social identities are associated with it, how it is produced and consumed, and what mechanisms regulate its distribution and use” (1997: 3). It does not matter where one begins on the circuit, as one has to go the whole way round before the study is complete. Each part of the circuit, as they clarify, is taken up and reappears in the next part. For example, if one starts with *Representation*, representations become an element in the next part, that is, of how *Identities* are constructed. And as one analyses production, one soon discovers how an artefact is represented and the social identities associated with it, tend to influence its production. I, therefore, found the circuit of culture a useful model in explaining change and continuity in the role and meaning of bark-cloth of the Baganda. As I talked to various people (bark-cloth makers, artists, designers and crafts producers, art and craft dealers) during the course of my fieldwork, it became evident that issues of social status, cultural identity, economics and shifting meanings associated with bark-cloth were inevitably interrelated. I have tried to explicate these interrelations in a theoretical diagram (plate 1.2).

According to this model, the role and meaning of bark-cloth can best be analysed by considering the two major domains that constitute the social structure of

Buganda namely: within the palace, and outside the palace. By analyzing the cultural practices in these distinctive social domains, one can then articulate the role of the bark-cloth artefact in communicating the meaning relating to the various identities within the Buganda social structure; identities associated with class and social status, economics, power and gender relations, at particular historical moments. Undoubtedly, analyzing any of the above phenomena within the discourse of bark-cloth would necessitate a closer examination of the cultural practices linked to the production, distribution and consumption of the various typologies of bark-cloth among the Baganda, as each typology is culturally imbued with specific meaning. However, it is equally important to note that the validity of meaning associated with bark-cloth is contingent on other factors that have regulated the production, distribution and consumption of bark-cloth at various periods in the history of Buganda during the last two-centuries. I have organized these into two basic categories: the exogenous as well as endogenous factors. Indigenous education and religion, intra-regional trade and internal politics are influential factors to the continuity, retention and revival of the meaning of bark-cloth while colonialism, inter-regional trade, foreign religion and education, have been cited among the exogenous factors.

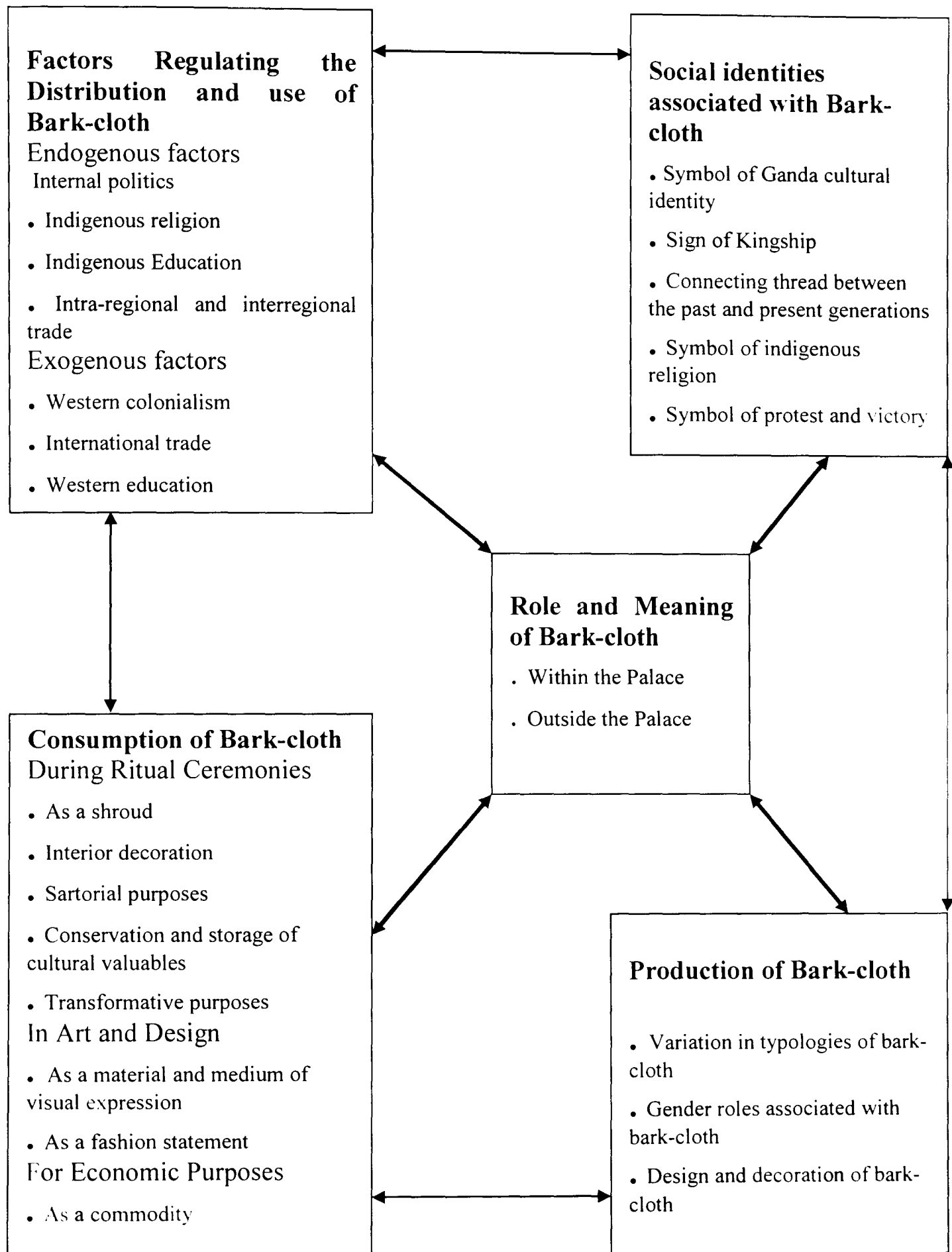


Plate 1.2 Continuity and Change in the Role and Meaning of Bark-cloth of the Baganda: A Conceptual Framework

1.5 Research Methodology

The study called for diversity in methodological approaches in the collection of data. I consulted a range of secondary sources available in the private and public collection. Important sources on the history of Buganda were available at Makerere University library, the British library, and the library for the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), Middlesex University library, and in the private collection of friends and family members. I was able to get access to some of the rare nineteenth and early twentieth-century publications that have long been out of print. For example, Apollo Kaggwa's⁷ initial publications (1901, 1905), and several reports by European explorers available at the British Museum and the SOAS library were useful to this study. Colonial reports on the Buganda Protectorate and unpublished information on bark-cloth available at the Uganda National Archives-Entebbe were also reviewed. Further information on Buganda was accessed from various internet-cites. Significantly was www.buganda.com, an internet-site managed by M. E. Ssemakula.

In addition, to document review, I carried out an archival search for the nineteenth and twentieth-century bark-cloth from Buganda, in the collection of the ethnographic museums in the United Kingdom. The ethnographical collection of the British Museum in London, and the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford, were important sources, for they house about a dozen examples of embellished bark-cloth, collected in Buganda in the first half of the last century.⁸ While some information relating to the design process was made

⁷ Some writers make reference to this Muganda politician and historian, as "KAGWA", but for consistency with the Kiganda spellings, I use "KAGGWA" in this study.

⁸ Nine of the decorated bark-cloth artifacts, were found at the British Museum of Mankind in London (Af1896,1224.00015; Af1930,0507.00016; Af1964,02.00071; Af1964,02.00072; Af1964,02.00073;

available (especially in reference to the British Museum collections), it was noted that apparently no in-depth research has yet been undertaken to establish the context in which these artefacts were produced or consumed. Some documented information by the nineteenth-century ethnographers in Buganda suggests that bark-cloth embellished with pattern and colour was produced exclusively for royal usage (Kollmann 1899: 31-33).

However, the discontinuity of this practice in the royal cultural rituals of the Baganda raises questions about the context in which the patterned bark-cloth was produced, and the possible factors that may have contributed to the discontinuation of this tradition. Since the Baganda people, are the custodians of knowledge on bark-cloth, I found the ethnographically grounded fieldwork to be a very crucial methodological approach for this study. As Vered Amit strongly states, “there is surely no other form of scholarly enquiry in which relationships of intimacy and familiarity between researcher and subject are envisioned as a fundamental medium of investigation” (2000: 2). Likewise, James Clifford Geertz states that, “it is out of participation in the general system of symbolic forms we call culture that participation in the particular we call art, which is in fact but a sector of it, is possible (1983: 109). Hence, the core of this study is informed by my interactions with the people involved with the production, consumption, and interpretation of the role and symbolic value of bark-cloth within Buganda. Most specifically, this is a qualitative study because it focuses on articulating people’s experiences with bark-cloth.

Af1964,02.00074; Af1964,02.00075; Af1964,02.00076; and Af1964,02.00077), and three others (1901.63.13; 1909.45.1; and 1942.1.441) were accessed at the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford.

1.5.1 Ethnographic Research in Buganda

The ethnographic fieldwork was undertaken for eleven months. The purpose of the research was to explore the transformations as well as continuities in the production, design, and application of bark-cloth products in the two domains of the Baganda society. The kingdom of Buganda is comprised of eighteen counties with a population of over four million people. However, ethnographic research was undertaken in six counties namely: Kyaddondo, Busiro, Mawokota, Kyaggwe, Ssinga and Buddu, between March 2002 and January 2003 (see plate 1.1).

Several reasons influenced my choice of the above counties for the ethnographic study. First, these counties were resourceful in relation to the processing, design and marketing of bark-cloth. However, a greater part of the research draws from the primary data collected in the counties of Kyaddondo, Busiro, Mawokota, and Buddu. Secondly, the selected counties were representative of Buganda in many respects. In particular, Kyaddondo County, which includes Kampala the capital city of Uganda, houses the headquarters of the Buganda kingdom; the Kabaka's (King's) main palace of Mengo. The royal tombs at Kasubi, the Uganda National Museum, the Uganda Craft Village, and several Art institutions and Art galleries, which are also in Kampala, were important sources of data. Busiro County was crucial because of its historic- cultural importance to the kingdom. In Busiro, we find the biggest concentration of *amasiro* (royal shrines), relics of the *kibuga*⁹ (royal capital), which were the biggest depository of the best bark-

⁹ The term "*kibuga*" is derived from the Luganda verb *okwebuga*, meaning to walk to and fro, or a busy place (Gutkind P.C. 1959: 29- 43). It has however been used interchangeably in literature to refer to the royal residence of the Kabaka and to Kampala the capital of Uganda. In this study I use the term to refer to the royal cites of Buganda.

cloth in Buganda. Kasubi Tombs is an important royal site because it houses the tombs of the past four Ssekabaka's (departed Kings) of Buganda including Muteesa I (1856-1884): Mwanga II (1884-1888, 1888-1897); Daudi Chwa II (1897-1939) and Frederick Edward Muteesa II (1939-1969). Apart from being a historical county, Mawokota is also the home ground for the *bakinda*, the royal bark-cloth makers.

Buddu, on the other hand, was of particular importance because of its superior techniques of bark-cloth production. Despite their late association with the Buganda kingdom¹⁰, the *banabuddu* (people from Buddu County) became the main suppliers of bark-cloth at the king's capital because of their superior technology. As of 2004, Buddu remains the biggest producer and supplier of bark-cloth in Uganda. Thirdly, the counties were selected because of their accessibility in terms of transport and communication. I travelled to and from the field with much ease by public means, and because a few participants had access to public phones (and some even had mobile phones), this facilitated setting of appointments and enabled me to use the limited research period efficiently and effectively.

1.5.2 Study Population and Sampling

In order to establish contact with the informants, I formed a Field Research Support Network (FRSN) comprising of family members, relatives, friends and colleagues at Makerere University, who introduced me to the various people with crucial information on bark-cloth. The FRSN enabled me to gain access to several important

¹⁰ Buddu was historically part of the Bunyoro-Kitara greater kingdom. Buddu became part of Buganda kingdom towards the end of the eighteenth century. Buddu has the most favorable climate for agricultural production, and produces the best bark-cloth in Buganda.

sources including among others; clan leaders, heads of family-lineages. Baganda politicians and members of the royal council, people entrusted with different duties at the royal palace, Baganda diviners and elders, bark-cloth makers, artists, crafts persons and art-dealers. From these sources, I was connected to other informants, and eventually I adopted the chain-referral approach as the main sampling procedure. Nearly one hundred people participated in the research. While the research was open to a wide range of participants, I selected some informants purposively, according to their experience in specific fields related to the study. For example, by way of chain referral sampling, I was able to get access to experienced bark-cloth makers, and other people who were actively involved in bark-cloth production and trade during the second quarter of the twentieth-century. Other informants were resourceful because of their experience in the political and cultural history of Buganda. For example, a few of my informants were former chiefs who had considerable knowledge about the social structures during the colonial period while others were clan leaders with knowledge of the general history of their clans. Artists, designers and crafts persons were selected according to their inclination towards use of bark-cloth. Thus, in my selection of the artefacts for this study, I was particularly more concerned with the variation in style of representation than the aesthetic merit of artworks or the level of education of their authors.

1.5.3 Research Tools

In order to gather data on the past and present traditions of bark-cloth within and outside the royal domain, I employed several tools of research including: interview, photography, video and audio recording, focus group discussion, participant observation, and mass media (newspapers, radio, and television). I had initially prepared four sets of

questionnaires, which I distributed in the earlier phase of the pilot study to a representational study population, comprising of people from different social groups and professional backgrounds including bark-cloth traders, craft persons, craft dealers, heads of clan lineages, care takers of royal sites, and elders. However, the response from the majority of the questionnaire-recipients indicated that they felt more comfortable to share verbally, what they knew about bark-cloth, rather than completing the questionnaires. The lack of enthusiasm towards the questionnaire approach was based on the view that it was a time-consuming research tool. However, when I consider the duration of time required to complete a questionnaire, vis-à-vis the duration of the interviews, which the informants preferred, I question their justification. It is very likely that problems of illiteracy were a key factor since almost 40% of the population of the people in Buganda, are unable to read and write. Hence, I decided to abandon this research tool, and instead concentrate on the interview method.

1.5.3.1 Interviews

I made formal and informal visits and conducted non-structured as well as semi-structured interviews with the royals and the common people. In fact, I began by conducting structured interviews based on four major themes relating to bark-cloth namely: origins of bark-cloth production, historical functions of bark-cloth in the royal context, historical functions of bark-cloth outside the palace, and the contemporary application of bark-cloth. However, preliminary in-field analysis clearly indicated significant limitations with the formal structured interviews. Most notably, the information collected was restricted to the questions asked, and did not offer links to a broader enquiry. In addition, the structured interview method did not give informants

enough opportunities to articulate their personal experiences, yet they were crucial to the study. Hence, in order to offset this problem, I resorted to semi-structured and open-ended-non-structured interviews. The latter methodological approach proved more successful because I was eventually able to gather in-depth information. Most of the interviews took place at the homes of the informants, and on many occasions I was given guided tours to the gardens of bark-cloth makers in order to inspect the different species from which bark-cloth is harvested.

In the palace domain, I interviewed several people that are entrusted with the responsibility of preserving the royal palaces and tombs. I interviewed several royal craftsmen, in particular, the *bakinda* (royal bark-cloth makers), the *bagirinya* (royal beaders) and the *Ssegirinya* (the chief decorator of the royal tombs). Other informants included the *bakembuga*, descendants of the royal wives, who attend to the royal tombs, in turns, on monthly basis. Outside the palace domain, I interviewed artists and art-educators, bark-cloth makers and traders, art dealers, elders and the general public that consumes bark-cloth and its related products. (See list of informants interviewed in Appendix 1).

1.5.3.2 Photography, Video, and Audio Recording

Audio and visual recording of information was a helpful research tool because it was a viable way of backing up my memory of the various cultural practices that involved the use of bark-cloth. Some of these recordings were influential in opening up discussion on the subject of bark-cloth. For example, photographs of patterned bark-cloth in the ethnographic collection of the British Museum and Pitt Rivers Museum helped tremendously in generating important information about the complexity surrounding the

notion of the use of patterned bark-cloth in the palace domain. As I tried to ask elders in Buganda about the historical methods of patterning bark-cloth, and the role that patterned bark-cloth played in and outside the palace it became evident that many people were not aware of what I was talking about. But when I presented them with pictures of the artefacts I was able to get some information about the patterning process, and most importantly, the photographs stimulated a discussion on other issues relating to the patronage of the patterned bark-cloth within and beyond the kingdom of Buganda. In addition, photography, video and audio recording were especially helpful during the process of data analysis. By listening again and again to the tape-recorded interviews and reading through the transcripts, I was able to articulate several issues that I would otherwise not have been able to recall with accuracy.

1.5.3.3 Focus Group Discussion

The information gathered at the family workshops by way of observation, photography and video recording, was substantiated with focus group discussions organized with the village elders, who by their age and professional experience could make a significant contribution to the investigation. This research tool was more successful in Kabira, Kakuuto and Kannabulemu sub-counties of Buddu, where there is a big concentration of bark-cloth producers. It was difficult to adopt the above tool in other counties because of the sparse distribution of bark-cloth makers; instead, I arranged non-structured interviews with selected individuals.

The discussions were aimed at generating collective information relating to the history of bark-cloth, methods of production, plant sources and the importance of bark-cloth, from the perspective of the local community. Significant information was collected

relating to the origins of bark-cloth and the general history of dress in Buganda. Nevertheless, I was aware of the fact that focus group discussions tend to promote the views of the most outspoken members of the community. I therefore followed up at a later stage some of the issues that were not properly articulated during the discussion, with the individual members concerned. For example, while the role of bark-cloth in indigenous religious practices is an undisputable fact, very few people were willing to openly discuss the subject because of their Christian faith. However, when I conducted private interviews with some individuals, in-depth information was attained.

1.5.3.4 Participant Observation

Participant observation was a crucial tool throughout the course of fieldwork. I observed and documented the day-to-day activities of the *bakomazi* (bark-cloth makers) and made enquiries on a broad range of issues relating to the production and role of bark-cloth in the two domains of the Buganda social structure. I spent a lengthy period of time (about six hours at one sitting) observing the process of bark-cloth making, and its related chain of social interactions. Because bark-cloth processing is a slow and strenuous activity, concerted effort is often required from the family members, neighbours and friends. Division of labour is according to age, gender and social status. For example, the processing of bark-cloth is essentially a male activity. Women participate indirectly by supplying food and drink to the bark-cloth makers, although some have started to participate in the finishing process by stitching bark-cloths ruptured in the process of manufacture due to scars and splits in the harvested bark. The elderly members of the community play a consultative role, and the young boys provide the necessary assistance. The presence of such a diverse population around the bark-cloth workshop was an

opportunity for me to initiate informal discussions about the various aspects relating to the production, functions and meanings associated with bark-cloth.

In the course of the field research, I attended several cultural functions where bark-cloth featured or was referred to as an important maker of the social identity of the Baganda. These included among others, introduction ceremonies, weddings, last funeral rites, and coronation anniversary ceremonies, art exhibitions and other cultural festivals. I was able to examine how bark-cloth was applied and the various meanings associated with it on each of these occasions. A list of events attended has been appended (Appendix 2), but let me cite a few examples just to illustrate the relevance of observation in the process of data collection for this research. In the latter half of 2002, I visited various craft marketing centres and art institutions around Kampala in order to closely examine how the role of bark-cloth has been redefined in the twenty-first century. I soon realized that the reality of events of the past still manifests through various practices in the present. For example it was interesting to observe how the current students in the Margaret Trowell School of Industrial and Fine Arts (MTSIFA) at Makerere University, have invoked the use of bark-cloth in tandem with cowries, beads and copper plates. the key items upon which devolved the intra-regional and inter-regional trade relations prior to external contact.

In the last week of July 2002, I attended the 9th Coronation anniversary celebrations for Kabaka (King) Ronald Mutebi II. The celebrations took place at his main palace in Mengo, which is also the royal capital. At the palace grounds, a cultural exhibition was organized for one week to mark the anniversary, and over thirty out of the fifty-two clans of Buganda displayed indigenous knowledge of, and technical skills in

different crafts including bark-cloth making, leatherwork, beadwork, and iron smith, among others. The festival was a rare opportunity, for it brought together the Baganda of different social hierarchies including royals, clan leaders and other people. Many people, irrespective of age, class or gender, appropriated bark-cloth in various ways, to celebrate the occasion. The festival provided space for examining the range of meanings accorded to bark-cloth, and the transformation of these meanings overtime, as discussed in chapter nine.

1.5.3.5 Mass Media (Newspapers, Radio, and Television)

Further information about the cultural importance of bark-cloth among the Baganda was obtained through mass media including newspapers, radio, and television. “Gye Nvudde”, a radio programme in Luganda, broadcasted by the Buganda-owned Central Broadcasting Service (CBS), was very informative because it hosted various discussants with broad knowledge about the history and the various cultural activities of the Baganda. Yet, Wavah Broadcasting Services (WBS) television programme “Omubala,” enabled me to follow the discussions on the various traditions of the Baganda and to observe some of the activities, as they happened in the cultural milieu.

1.6 Data Analysis

Data analysis was carried out both in the field, and after the major field investigations had been finalized. In-field analysis was mainly done outside the official research duration. By engaging the local community in ordinary conversations as they went about with their day-to-day activities, I was able to get varied opinions, which I was not able to attain during the interviews. I shared my opinions of related issues with the ordinary

people and I found out that several of the conclusions reached in this study were as a result of this dialectical flow of information. My visual diary became a handy tool during the in-field analysis. I tried to locate gaps in the data, which I filled by returning to the field in order to get supplementary information. As far as it was possible, I tried to connect with the informants, from whom I had originally gathered the information. After field research, I concentrated on data indexing and thematic analysis. However, out-of-the-field analysis has been a continuous process until the final stages of this thesis. During my write-up period, I have had to make calls back to the field, to cross-check a few aspects, and a constant review of my audio, visual and textual material, has been a necessary process of the data analysis.

1.7 Challenges of Field Research

The field research process did not go without any challenges. However, I was able to overcome most of them without causing serious impact on the field results. Being an indigenous researcher was an advantage in some respects; I knew fairly well my research territory and have a very good command of Luganda, the local language. However, being a Muganda, and moreover a woman, provoked several challenges, especially during the initial phase of my field research. My ethnographic experience has proved that conducting an ethnographic study in a home country or in a familiar setting does not necessarily guarantee access to information, and can at times be even more challenging than ethnography undertaken abroad.

First, since bark-cloth production in Buganda is a predominantly male-dominated domain, it was a difficult experience to interview some of the informants who still held a conservative view that women are not supposed to get involved in any activities related to

bark-cloth. For example, when I contacted some of the royal bark-cloth makers at Mengo Palace during the 9th Coronation Anniversary celebrations, they were initially disinterested in having a discussion on the subject of their profession, arguing that I was a woman, and I was therefore not supposed to get involved in any activities related to bark-cloth production. In fact one of them commented: “you are only a woman yet you expect us to tell you our secrets [reserved only for men]?” (“oli mukazi bukazi era tukubuulire ebyama byaffe?”). Nevertheless, after a long explanation about the objectives of my study, and the importance of documenting the history of bark-cloth, I was eventually given audience. Of course, I cannot rule out the possibility that some “secrets” may have been hidden from me.

Secondly, because in the past, ethnographic fieldwork has been considered a foreign adventure undertaken by foreign researchers, many Baganda are not yet familiar with the notion of indigenous ethnography. As such, there is still a tendency among some members of the local community to give more attention to foreign researchers than their indigenous counterparts. A few moments after discussion with the royal bark-cloth makers, Cecilia Nyamweru, a British female researcher, arrived and asked similar questions. I was surprised that she was given immediate attention. I felt there were double standards because Nyamweru was a female like me, and therefore, if it was a question of gender, she should not equally qualify to get access to information on bark-cloth. While I am not complaining about the hospitality accorded to her, and to foreign researchers in general, I question whether this imbalance is a perpetuation of the colonial legacy.

My experience is not unique because other indigenous scholars have also reported similar experiences. Notably, Sylvia Nannyonga-Tamusuza, an ethnomusicologist,

reports that she was denied access to Mengo Palace for the first four months of her research; but when Gerhard Kubik, a German/Austrian musicologist requested to visit the palace, he was openly accepted. However, Nannyonga-Tamusuza was ironically allowed into the palace as Kubik's interpreter. In fact, she questions whether her presence at the palace was ignored because the Baganda actually mistook her for an "interpreting machine" that could not absorb anything, or they simply forgot that she was a Muganda (2001: 37-38). Nannyonga-Tamusuza also reports of another incident, where she was denied permission to take pictures at Kasubi Tombs; but when she visited the tombs again with David Wylie, a friend from Northern Ireland, she was even allowed to make a video recording (ibid: 38). Further challenges relating to negotiating one's identity in the field where colonial legacy still prevails, are analyzed by Alphonse Tierou, a choreographer and researcher from Cote d'Ivoire. Tierou shares his experience when he was arrested in one African country in 1987 after giving a lecture on African culture, which was considered suspicious. He was brought before the ministry of youth, sports, culture and scientific research for interrogation but following intervention from a white associate, who spoke out on his behalf, he was released and given access to the media (as cited in Nannyonga-Tamusuza 2001: 38-39).

Thirdly, although my academic status gave me an opportunity to access important cultural sites, it also posed significant challenges to the investigation. The fact that I was collecting information on bark-cloth for academic purposes generated little interest among some informants who were convinced that a lot of ethnographic research carried out in Buganda has been beneficial only to members of the academic community, but not the ordinary Baganda. As such, some of the informants were hesitant to release

information unless they were sure of the benefits of my research to the local community. In other instances, a few informants regarded the investigation as an opportunity for trading their knowledge and skills for financial and material gain. My experience made me realize that being a researcher I was considered more of an “outsider” than an “insider”. I therefore, had to negotiate my identity in the field in order to win the confidence of the Baganda. Because I am well aware of the cultural etiquette of the Baganda, and the importance of gifts in any social relation, I decided to give a few presents to some of my informants in order to facilitate the communication. In addition, to reduce the gap created by my academic status, I adopted a suitable dress code (T-shirt, long skirts, a head scarf, and sandals) to enable me to fit comfortably into the rural environment. At that moment, I realized that dress actually plays a much more complex role than the conventional modesty/immodesty, protection or aesthetic theories. It is indeed a system of communication and therefore a ‘language’ in its own right, as symbolic interaction theorists have already asserted.¹¹ Above all, I was fully aware of the benefits of giving due respect to all my informants irrespective of age, gender or socio-economic background. In fact, some of the contacts made were helpful during the pilot study conducted in Kyaddondo and Busiro counties, while others were important sources during the actual field research.

1.8 Outline of the Thesis

The structure of the thesis has been informed by the recurring themes of the data collected. The thesis has been divided into ten chapters. In chapter two, I review the literature relating to the history of bark-cloth in Buganda. Overall, the available literature

¹¹ For example see Roland Barthes (1967) and Susan B. Kaiser 1997 [1990].

on bark-cloth tends to focus on the processes of bark-cloth manufacture. As some scholars have noted, until relatively recently, the mode of production of cultural artefacts was assumed to be the prime determinant of the meaning which those products would or could come to possess (Paul du Gay, Stuart Hall et al 1997:3). I consider the process of manufacture as an important aspect in the production of meaning of bark-cloth. However, my research embraces several other factors (social, economic, political and cultural) that have contributed to, and influenced in various respects, the meaning of bark-cloth among the Baganda, in a more or less, chronological order.

Thus, in chapter three, I discuss the history of bark-cloth in relation to the history of the kingdom of Buganda before external contact (1300-1840) while chapter four provides a discussion on the nineteenth-century external interventions by the coastal-Swahili Arabs and their implications on the design and usage of bark-cloth. I also examine the impact of Western missionary ideologies on the transformation of the iconography of bark-cloth. For convenience, I have delimited this chapter to the period between 1840 and 1899. Chapter five begins with the signing of the official colonial agreement between Buganda and the British colonial Government, in 1900. I discuss the impact of colonial economic policies on the production and appropriation of bark-cloth. Further changes relating to the social, economic and political structures of Buganda under British colonial rule until 1962, when the republic of Uganda was established are analysed in chapter six. In chapter seven, I consider the overall impact of Western education on the bark-cloth industry, focusing attention on the negative as well as the positive outcomes of this cultural transformation. In chapter eight, I discuss further political influences on bark-cloth at the dawn of independence. I focus on the political

and economic crisis that characterized the post-independence period, and its impact on the application of bark-cloth. Chapter nine deals with the restoration of the Buganda monarchy and the latest changes in the application and decoration of bark-cloth, and the associated practices through which change, retention and revival of the role and meaning of bark-cloth of the Baganda could be deciphered. The last chapter summarizes the thesis and proposes areas for further research.

2 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE ON BARK-CLOTH

2.1 Introduction

The literature review has revealed that the subject of East African textiles and dress in general, and bark-cloth in particular, has attracted inadequate scholarly attention among art historians. Most of the literature so far available on bark-cloth focuses on the process of bark-cloth manufacture, and the cultural-historical functions of the bark-cloth. Less attention has been paid to the analysis of continuity and change in the role and meaning of bark-cloth within the broader context of the social, economic and political history of Buganda. Conversely, less attention has been focused on how the social, economic and political shifts in Buganda have contributed to the transformation in the production, functions and symbolic significance of bark-cloth. In this thesis, I have endeavoured to bring together the above divergent variables germane to the articulation of the relevance of bark-cloth, and its contribution to the general analysis of the history and culture of the Baganda.

Throughout my investigations, I have only come across two books solely devoted to the subject of bark-cloth of the Baganda, and both publications are now out of print. The first one is by an indigenous historian J. Kakooza¹ (1950) written in Luganda, the indigenous language of the Baganda, and the second is by Hammo Sassoon (1973). The literature in both books heavily draws on the historical oral traditions of the Baganda, which associate the origins of bark-cloth to Kintu, the legendary founder of the kingdom

¹ The name of the author is spelled as “KAKOZA”, but in this research, I have adopted “KAKOOZA”, the correct Kiganda spelling of this name.

of Buganda. Further, literature on bark-cloth has been cited from various anthropological, ethnographic and historical accounts on Buganda and Uganda in general, but also on art and design history in Africa. These mainly appear in book publications and journals, as well as in unpublished theses and dissertations. Although the current study is on bark-cloth of the Baganda, it is worth noting that bark-cloth making is a universal practice that has been known for centuries among different ethnic societies in Africa and elsewhere around the world. For a better discussion, I have presented the literature thematically. Thus, section 2.2 deals with the scholarship on bark-cloth outside Buganda while section 2.3 focuses on the literature on bark-cloth among the Baganda. Therein, I highlight the major discussions on the origins of bark-cloth in Buganda; the process of bark-cloth manufacture; the practice of embellishing bark-cloth; the functions and symbolic significance of bark-cloth among the Baganda; and the research methodologies applied by various scholars on bark-cloth in Buganda.

2.2 Scholarship on Bark-cloth Outside Buganda

In his 1972 publication, *Tapa in Polynesia*, Simon Kooijman discusses the use of bark-cloth in East Asia, China, Taiwan, Korea, Thailand, Burma, Java and Central Celebes. Likewise, Nicholas Thomas, tracing the history of cloth in Polynesia, reveals how the technology of *tapa*² originated from insular South-east Asia to Hawaii and Rapanui (Easter Island) (1994: 4). On the other hand, R. Neich and M. Pendergast (1997) have documented comprehensively the process of bark-cloth making and decoration in various islands of the Southern Pacific including among others: Samoa, Tonga, Papua New Guinea, Cook Islands, and have emphasised that each island had its own distinctive

² *Tapa* is a term used for bark-cloth, especially in the Southern Pacific.

style of decoration. In relation to Africa, John Picton and John Mack comment on the distribution of bark-cloth in the Sub-Saharan region of Africa. In a publication that accompanied an exhibition *African Textiles* by the British Museum of Mankind in 1979 (a second edition published a decade later), Picton and Mack give a comprehensive history of textiles in Africa covering a broad range of fabric technologies. They attribute a few pages to the study of bark-cloth. According to them, “The best-known centers of bark-cloth production in Africa are in the central part of the continent, in the area of the Zaire Basin, Rwanda, Uganda, Malawi and Zambia” although the technology of bark-cloth making was also known among the Asante people of Ghana, and in Madagascar, Liberia, Togo, and south-east Nigeria (1989: 39). John Gillow mentions that, “In Central Africa and parts of East Africa, bark-cloth is still worn for prestigious ceremonial occasions both in Uganda and among the Pygmies and the Kuba of the Congo” (2003: 12-13). However, a more comprehensive research on the bark-cloth painting tradition of the pygmies, particularly the Mbuti women, has been undertaken by several twentieth-century anthropologists including among others: Paul Schebesta (1940), Colin M. Turnbull (1965), Barry S. Hewlett (1989), Robert F. Thompson (1983: 1993); and Georges Meurant and Robert F. Thompson (1995). As they have noted, the Mbuti bark-cloth designs “make use of a multitude of motifs linked by a geometrical continuity” (1995: 163).

Bringing the discussion closer, Eugene C. Burt (1995: 76), in his article entitled ‘Bark-cloth in East Africa,’ states that by the end of the nineteenth-century, bark-cloth was the preferred material for clothing in many cultures of East Africa, in a zone extending across southern Uganda to northwest Tanzania, down western Tanzania to

northern Mozambique and Malawi³. Burt's statement resonates with Emin Pasha who visited East and Central Africa during the last quarter of the nineteenth-century. In a collection of his letters and journals, compiled and edited by G. Schweinfurth, Pasha states that at the time of his visit, bark-cloth was the source of clothing among ordinary people in Buganda, and among the better classes in Karagwe, Rwanda, Bunyoro and Busoga. R. M. Ojuku mentions that "In the south and south-east of Uganda, the Konjo and Amba people wore bark-cloth loin-cloths which were tied around the waist and in between the legs [;]... the Tusi and Hima women of western Uganda adopted a style covering ...[the] head and body [;]...in the central province, among the Baganda, Banjoro [*sic*], Basoga, men wore a strip of bark-cloth [tied] ... toga-wise hung over one shoulder...In Kyoga basin and Eastern Uganda, the Gwere, Sebei, Jopadhola, Gishu, Gwe, Samia and Teso, earlier wore skin and later adopted bark-cloth [while among] the Nilo-Hamites...[b]ark cloth was used, but not exclusively (1989: 55). Edward G. Kimwani also gives a pictorial description of the manufacture of bark-cloth in Bukoba district of north-western Tanzania, which is almost similar to that of the Baganda (1951: 85-98). In my research I provide historical information that enables us to understand more explicitly the similarities in the methods of bark-cloth manufacture between the two regions. I must also point out at this stage that whereas there has been a wide use of bark-cloth among the East African societies, it is in Buganda where the tradition of bark-cloth making has persisted against odds at a fairly significant scale into the twenty-first century. It is therefore out of this background that I come to investigate more closely the history of bark-cloth of the Baganda, with a major aim of establishing how its production

³ Burt also provides a map illustrating the various regions in East Africa, where the use of bark cloth has been observed and documented.

and usage has changed over time, and how this transformation has in turn influenced a shift in the meaning and symbolic significance of bark-cloth.

2.3 Scholarship on Bark-cloth in Buganda

Literature on bark-cloth in Buganda, as elsewhere, is still very inadequate. The earliest reference to bark-cloth of the Baganda can be found in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century anthropological surveys on Buganda by European explorers, ethnographers, and missionaries whose reports include brief statements about the production and functions of bark-cloth (J. H. Speke (1862); Schweinfurth (1888); H. M Stanley (1899); H. A. Mackay (1898)) although a few others offer more detailed information on the subject (Roscoe 1911). The first article solely on ‘Bark-cloth of Uganda’ appeared in the *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* in 1893. The article was meant to announce a then recent addition of a bark-cloth artefact from [B]uganda to the collection of the Museum of Economic Botany at Kew. The article expounds on the cultivation of bark-cloth trees and on the extensive usage of bark-cloth in Buganda.

Twentieth-century literature on bark-cloth was pioneered by Apolo Kaggwa, a Muganda historian and former page at the palace of Kabaka Muteesa I (1856-1884). Kaggwa became the *Kattikiro* (Prime Minister) of Buganda during the reign of Ssekabaka Daudi Chwa II (1897-1939), which enabled him greater access to oral traditions of the Baganda, and to literacy, which had just been introduced by the missionaries. Kaggwa compiled a book, entitled *Empisa z’Abaganda* (Customs of the Baganda) first published in 1905. In this publication, Kaggwa gives a historical account of a wide range of the

Baganda customs and highlights the social-cultural importance of bark-cloth, both within and outside the palace context although he does not discuss the process of bark-cloth manufacture. While Kaggwa's writing is not analytical, it forms an important source of raw data for this thesis.

About the same time, a similar publication, *The Baganda: An account of their Native Customs and Beliefs* was written by John Roscoe (1911), a British missionary, who spent a tremendous amount of time off his missionary work collecting ethnographic information on different ethnic groups in Uganda. Roscoe's publication is similar to Kaggwa's because both writers tackled similar topics relating to a broad range of subjects about the customs and traditions of the Baganda including bark-cloth manufacture. Kaggwa and Roscoe carried out significant investigations about the social customs of the Baganda together. They consulted the elders and professionals, who came to the palace at Kaggwa's invitation (Roscoe 1911: ix). However, the two publications represent some degree of variation. Unlike Roscoe, Kaggwa gives a broader description of the Kiganda customs and the use of bark-cloth in the various cultural spheres, yet unlike Kaggwa, Roscoe documents more elaborately on the history and process of bark-cloth making in Buganda. Roscoe even compiled a comprehensive list of the *Kiganda* names of the bark-cloth-bearing species in the different counties of Buganda by the beginning of the twentieth-century. These two publications, together with the subsequent documents by other historians (Kakooza 1950; Lugira 1970; Makumbi 1976; Picton and Mack 1979) thus provided me with the necessary background information for my fieldwork, and enabled me to identify the gaps in the scholarship of bark-cloth that ought to be filled.

After all, Roscoe acknowledges in the preface of his publication that his desire was “to place the facts so collected in the hands of experts for scientific purposes (1911: ix).

In an article ‘Bark-cloth Hammers’, E.C. Lanning (1959) gives a brief history of bark-cloth of the Baganda although his central focus is on the tools used in bark-cloth manufacture. His analysis of the evolution of the mallets used in the process of bark-cloth making is based on archaeological excavations at Munsa in Mubende (Buwekula County). Lanning opens up a comparative discussion of the beaters used elsewhere in Africa and other regions of the world where bark-cloth making was a tradition. His research reveals that each area may well have developed its own particular technique in the fashioning of its own implements, the choice of which was contingent on the availability of materials and the requirements demanded of the implements. As Lanning states: “some were used to produce rough sheets or inferior wrappings, others to produce cloth suitable for apparel, while others were used to produce nothing more practical than strips of binding material” (1959:82).

2.3.1 Origins of Bark-cloth in Buganda

The origins and antiquity of bark-cloth in Buganda are not clearly known as several theories have been advanced on the subject. The migration theory has attracted the most attention among foreign writers (Roscoe (1911); Thompson (1934); Burt (1995) Stairs (2002)) while the indigenous historians, Kaggwa (1905); Kakooza (1950); Lugira (1970); Nyanzi Makumbi (1976), assert that the art of bark-cloth making was a local invention. However, Eugene C. Burt (1995), Richard Reid (2002) and David Stairs (2002) have highlighted the difficulty in pinpointing the origins of bark-cloth-making in

Buganda and East Africa in general. Drawing on the historical discourses about the migrations that occurred in Sub-Saharan Africa around the thirteenth and fourteenth-centuries, Burt states that, “the available evidence allows us to postulate that bark-cloth making arose in Central Africa and then was carried to East Africa during the migrations that saw the peopling of the eastern region of the continent” (1995: 78). In a similar way, David Stairs, in his article ‘The Persistent Vitality of the Vernacular’ published in the *Design Issues*, hypothesizes that “Since modern Uganda languages derive from a Bantu parent language, [then] both language and [bark-cloth] fabric could be connected to the great Bantu diaspora east and south” (2002:76). Still sustaining the migration theory, A. D. F. Thompson states that “It is probable that the Baganda brought with them to Uganda the art of making bark-cloth, and it has been fostered by them ever since” (1934:17). On the other hand, Roscoe presents several hypotheses in relation to the origins of bark-cloth in Buganda including: 1) King Kintu brought the tree as well as people skilled in making bark-cloth; 2) the Baganda possibly learnt the technology from their neighbours the Banyoro; 3) the technology of bark-cloth manufacture was already known by the indigenous people who inhabited the region that is presently known as Buganda (1911: 403).

However, indigenous historians (Kaggwa (1905); Kakooza (1950); Lugira (1970), and Nyanzi Makumbi (1976), associate the discovery of bark-cloth technology to the descendants of the *ngonge* (otter) clan, one of the social groups that migrated to the region presently known as Buganda, in the period between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries⁴. Kaggwa states that Ssemwanga was the historical founder of bark-cloth in

⁴ For a detailed discussion on the different waves of migrations in Buganda, see Ssemakula Kiwanuka (1971).

Buganda (1999 [1905]: 126) yet Kakooza names the founder as Buyungo, while both Makumbi and Lugira refer to him as Wamala. My own field investigations revealed that as recently, as 2003, many people in Buganda still hold to this theory although differing names were cited for the legendary “founder” of bark-cloth in Buganda. For example, in Buddu County, some informants mentioned Kinkumu while others referred to the inventor of bark-cloth as Kabogozza.⁵ These differing responses exemplify some of the problems associated with oral tradition as a methodology in historical research. Nevertheless, there was a unified view that the technology of bark-cloth production was ‘discovered’ by members of the *ngonge* clan. I discuss these theories more broadly in chapter three.

2.3.2 Process of Bark-cloth-Manufacture among the Baganda

The process of bark-cloth manufacture has been well described in many of the sources cited (Kakooza (1950); Hamos Sassoon (1973); Schweinfurth (1888); Roscoe (1911), Picton and Mack (1989 [1979]; Makumbi (1976); Burt (1995); Reid (2002)). Whereas A. D. F. Thompson (1934) gives an ethnographic account of his encounter of the process of bark-cloth manufacture, he does not specify the location within Buganda, where his observations were made. Emin Pasha observed the division of labour in the bark-cloth making process, stating that a considerable number of people were employed in the process. He further mentioned that, “women strip the bark cloth from the trees and do any repairing to the cloth that is necessary but men beat out the bark and make the

⁵ Focus group discussions in Kabira, Kakuuto and Kannabulemu Sub-counties of Buddu County, June and July 2002.

cloth” (as quoted in Schweinfurth 1888: 518). However, at the dawn of the twentieth-century, the manufacture of bark-cloth was predominantly an occupation of the male members of the Baganda community, a tradition that has continued until present, as of 2005, as my own investigations on the subject have revealed. I provide further discussion on the subject in the next chapter.

On the other hand, Sir Bland-Sutton observed the close attention paid to the design and finishing processes of bark-cloth manufacture in Buganda. Bland-Sutton states that, “The strips [of bark-cloth] are sewn together with extreme neatness to any desired size...The bark-cloth is often variegated by bold stencilled designs, sometimes in grotesque patterns, by means of a black dye” (1933:66-67). His work gives us some clue about the design practice on bark-cloth during the third decade of the twentieth-century. My research serves as a follow up on the art and design practice involving the use of bark-cloth, and the meanings that emanate from this socio-cultural practice. Yet Oliver Ojuku (1989), in his undergraduate dissertation, brings together information relating to the sources and species of bark-cloth, the techniques of production, decoration and patterning, and provides a range of illustrations of patterned bark-cloth from Buganda, in the collection of several museums around the United Kingdom. As a textile technologist, Ojuku was concerned with the physical properties of bark-cloth, the methods of manufacture, and its limitations as far as the dyeing process is concerned in comparison to printed textiles. However, my research aims to highlight the signifying functions of bark-cloth; in other words, how, as a cultural artefact, bark-cloth serves in the language and meaning system of the Baganda, and how that meaning has constantly been negotiated by social, economic, political and cultural factors.

Further contribution to the changing traditions of bark-cloth comes from Lucy Mair, a British anthropologist, who spent several months in Buganda investigating the effect of European contact on the village life of the Baganda. Her research interest was in determining how the institutions of the indigenous culture served the basic needs of the Baganda society, and the extent to which the modifications in those institutions, necessitated by changed conditions, had or had not dislocated a working system of social co-operation at the time of her visit in Buganda. Outcomes of her research were published in 1934 in a book entitled *An African People in the Twentieth Century*. The geographical scope of her ethnographic study was delimited to three Buganda villages namely, Ngogwe in Kyagwe County, Kisimula in Bulemeezi County and Matala in Buddu County. Mair commented on the changes relating to the bark-cloth industry where social co-operation was an important factor. She states:

Bark cloth making may have been formerly kept within one household, the head of the household working with two or three boys. Nowadays very few men do it at all, and three or four of these will join to use the shed in which the beating is done...There is altogether much less of such cooperation now than there seems to have been in the past (1934:124-126)

Mair does not mention the location she is referring to in her statement. However, in an almost seemingly contradictory statement, J. W. Chanell, who published an article 'Bark Cloth Makers of Buganda' almost thirty years later, observed that, "bark cloth is...produced on a cottage industry basis throughout the whole of Buganda" (1962:153). My research provides more information on both Mair's and Chanell's versions on the state of the bark-cloth industry in Buganda during the last century. In chapters five and six, I substantiate Mair's observation by analyzing the various factors that contributed to

the decline and near-demise of the bark-cloth industry in Buganda during the first two quarters of the twentieth-century, and the circumstances under which the revival of the bark-cloth industry occurred during the mid-twentieth-century, a period that Chanell is making reference to.

Perpetua Ipulet's contribution to the scholarship of bark-cloth focuses on the distribution and local uses of the ficus species in the central region of Uganda. Ipulet correctly emphasizes that in Buganda, the outstanding use of ficus species is the local manufacture of bark-cloth. Ipulet further states that "the quality of bark cloth from a re-growth is poorer than from the initial bark" (1993:94). This does not seem to be the case; based on my ethnographic research in various counties of Buganda, especially in Buddu, which has for several centuries been the leading producer of bark-cloth. I was informed that for every subsequent re-growth, the fabric made is usually of a better quality unless the bark was not harvested during the appropriate period.⁶

2.3.3 Embellishment of Bark-cloth

A considerable collection of patterned bark-cloth from Buganda in the late nineteenth and early to mid-twentieth century is available at the British Museum of Mankind in London, the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford, and the Linden Museum in Stuttgart, photographic illustrations of which have been published in John Picton and John Mack (1989:167); Michèle Coquet (1993: 123-127); Christopher Spring (1997: 53-54); and John Gillow (2001:35). However, very little information has been documented in relation to the history, process, and social life of these artefacts, and there is a lot of

⁶ See the Process of bark cloth making in the next chapter.

room for research in this area. Pasha as cited in Schweinfurth (1888), Kollman (1899). Roscoe (1911), Trowell (1953), Lugira (1970) and Reid (2002) have all observed that patterned bark-cloth was, at some point in time, an exclusive fabric of the royal personage in Buganda. However, Picton and Mack mention that the process of bark-cloth decoration by the Baganda “is shrouded in secrecy” (1989:166), which raises questions about the historicity and authenticity of the art of bark-cloth painting in Buganda.

Lugira’s 1970 publication, *Ganda Art*, was aimed at understanding the mentality and disposition of the Baganda people towards art. His broader aim was to find out how realization of indigenous Christian art could be attempted. Lugira’s analysis of the Ganda aesthetics of body care and adornment provides some clues in relation to the limited embellishment of bark-cloth in Buganda compared to other regions that have similarly had a long bark-cloth tradition; for example, among the Mbuti of the Ituri forests in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Tongan, Samoan and Melanesian peoples of the Southern Pacific (Neich and Pendergast 1997).

My research opens up a debate on this contentious subject. I provide my own account from the field, on the process of bark-cloth decoration, and I examine why there has been so little information on the methods and symbolic significance of patterned bark-cloth in Buganda, even among the Baganda themselves.

2.3.4 Functions and Symbolic Significance of Bark-cloth among the Baganda

Emin Pasha noted the economic value of bark-cloth of the Baganda when he visited several regional markets during the last quarter of the nineteenth-century. He observed that the price of bark-cloth varied considerably according to the colour and

quality of the fabric, and when the material had a pattern on it, it was regarded as a fancy article without fixed price (as cited in Schweinfurth 1888: 119). However, Richard J. Reid (2002) has recently undertaken a more systematic research on the economic importance of bark-cloth during the pre-colonial period. As he states, “The value...placed on the production of bark cloth owed much to its commercial strength. From the late eighteenth-century and throughout the nineteenth, bark cloth was probably Buganda’s single most important regional export” (2002:136). Reid’s comprehensive discussion enables us to articulate clearly the economic value associated with bark-cloth, which actually sheds more light on the current research especially as regards the commoditisation of bark-cloth in modern times.

Paul Kollmann, on the other hand, observed the importance of patterned bark-cloth as a marker of social hierarchy among the Baganda. “Specifically fine pieces having numerous symmetrical figures delineated on them with black earth”, as he states, “used to be reserved for the king and the princesses” (1899:31). Roscoe (1911: 406) and Trowell (1953: 182), also make reference to the above statement. John Gillow points to the strong ritual importance of bark-cloth in several ethnic societies of Uganda. Among the Baganda, bark-cloth is used as shrouds and worn as traditional dress at funerals and other ‘cultural’ occasions (2003: 172). Gillow uses a presumably local terminology *lusango* to refer to bark-cloth of the Baganda. I have not come across this particular terminology in my research but Roscoe mentioned that the best bark-cloth trees were grown at Sango in Buddu County (1911: 406). This may perhaps explain why bark-cloth possibly produced in this region could be referred to as *olusango* even though Gillow does not claim so.

Otherwise, *kimote* and *omusala* are among other terms used by the people in Buganda to refer to *olubugo*, the most common terminology for bark-cloth.

In their articles, A. D. F. Thompson, and J.W. Chanell bring into focus the participation of some members of the European community in Uganda, in extending the role and meaning of bark-cloth. Thompson outlines the various design products which the Europeans, resident in Uganda, made out of bark-cloth of the Baganda. Similarly, Chanell attributes the transformation in the functions of bark-cloth to European education, and the tourist industry, which was beginning to take root in Uganda at the time of his visit during the early 1960s.

Benjamin Ray reports that bark-cloth is used as a curtain to divide the interior of the royal shrines, but also to conceal the *ekibira* (“forest”), which the Baganda refer to as the domain of the spirit of the departed kings (1972:37). Further, Ipulet correctly states that “bark cloth remains a very important cloth in Baganda families in the dressing and burying of the dead [and] a Muganda still deeply attached to his culture would rather bury the dead using bark cloth” (1993: 95). However, Nyanzi Makumbi (1976) brings to our attention the importance of bark-cloth as a symbol of wealth. For that purpose, as he argues, the Baganda used to make a good collection of them, and secured them in a storage compartment *ekibanyi*, located above the fireplace. Thus the quantity of bark-cloth kept in storage determined the wealth of a person, and it was a rule that every family kept a good stock of bark-cloth awaiting various functions. In his discussion Makumbi observes that although some of the functions of bark-cloth have long been overtaken by the changing social circumstances, new or modern uses of the bark fabric have been invented by artists, not only those in school (having a formal European art-

training background) but also those trained through the indigenous system of education. Although Makumbi did not carry forward this area of investigation, he opened the discussion and left a lot of room for further research.

Yet Ojuku argues that “For those countries [where] barkcloth is indigenous and is still produced... it is a national heritage and may only be sustained by using its characteristic features and patterns in modern textiles while it is hoped [that] a scientific breakthrough might occur in future for a more modern end use” (1986:80). However, Ojuku’s interpretation of change in relation to science and technology tends to place the object of bark-cloth in a frozen past. My research has proved that even without a technological revolution, it is still possible to make some meaningful intervention on bark-cloth through visual research. In fact, Frank Wendogambi (1992) attempted an investigation on the subject in his undergraduate dissertation entitled ‘The Present Use of Bark-cloth in Uganda’ in which, he gives a wide range of design products made out of bark-cloth, the majority of which are aimed to target the tourist community. However, because of the descriptive nature of his research, which centres on the objects, Wendogambi makes only a small contribution to the general scholarship on continuity and change of the role and meaning of bark-cloth among the Baganda. My research highlights the transformations in the design and usage of bark-cloth in view of the changing social, economic, political and scientific phenomena.

Hanne Kjaer (1995), on the contrary, is more concerned with the evolution of the “traditional” dress style in Uganda. While she draws a lot from earlier publications, Kjaer’s chronological presentation of the dress style of the Baganda is quite relevant to the present study. However, like several of her counterparts already cited, Kjaer does not

put into context the factors that contributed to change in the application and meaning of bark-cloth, which is the focus of this study.

Cecilia Nyamweru and Catherine Ggombe (2002) carried out a preliminary survey into the state of the bark-cloth industry of the Baganda in the twenty-first century. Their enquiry focuses on the environmental issues related to bark-cloth production as well as the current economic and aesthetic uses of bark-cloth. I was privileged to be availed a copy of the working draft of their survey although I was not allowed to make citations or quotations since the research was still in progress. However, after reading through their preliminary report, I am very optimistic that the outcomes of their research will enrich the current repertoire of information on bark-cloth in Buganda.

The most recent study, which includes a brief discussion on bark-cloth of the Baganda, is G.W. Kyeyune's doctoral dissertation on 'Art in Uganda in the 20th Century'. While reviewing the indigenous art traditions that have served as cultural resources for the artists in Uganda, Kyeyune joins several other writers already cited above, in enumerating the historical functions of bark-cloth. He emphasizes that activities, such as bark-cloth making, were matters of cultural and social significance affecting the well being of the whole community, of which the *omukomazi* (bark-cloth maker) was an integral part. For that reason, "whenever the *mukomazi* made the bark cloth, he was always conscious of his role in the perpetuation of the mythical and corporeal society" (2003:45).

2.3.5 Methodologies Applied by Various Researchers on Bark-cloth in Buganda

While reviewing the literature, I have put into consideration the research approach and methodology used by the various scholars as well as the limitations and strengths of the sources cited. Kaggwa and Roscoe's failure to acknowledge their sources renders these important documents rather patronizing. Because Kaggwa occupied a privileged position as a *Kattikiro*, he was able to dislodge informants from their natural environment to come to the *lubiri* (royal palace) to give the necessary information. As Roscoe acknowledges, "I owe a debt of gratitude to my friend, Sir Apolo Kaggwa, K.C.M.G., Prime Minister and Regent of [B]uganda, in whose house most of my information was collected. He spared no pains to bring old people whom I should otherwise have failed to see, and who would have refused to give information to an Englishman, had not Sir Apolo induced them to do so..." (1911: x). Arguably, the covert difference in the social status between the researchers and their informants presents some complexity in validating some of the data especially if the writers did not get an opportunity to observe some of the events as they happened in their natural environment. By no means am I suggesting that the 'field' is the source of ultimate 'truth' about cultural phenomena, but the point I am making here is that at times it becomes more difficult, in some cases, to draw conclusions based on narratives than on observed experiences. Moreover, Roscoe states in his preface that it was upon future researchers to give more scientific analysis of the data he documented. It is also noteworthy that reliance on an individual research tool tends to present limitations to the research process yet this deficiency could be overcome by use of a variety of research instruments.

Trowell, unlike Roscoe who was basically an “arm-chair” researcher, had a lot of opportunities to travel to the field in order to collect ethnographic materials for the Uganda Museum as well as for international exhibitions. However, she did not give a detailed study on the subject of bark-cloth, since her research covered a broad field of cultural investigation. I, therefore, fill in some of the gaps especially in relation to the changing functions of bark-cloth of the Baganda, which I present in chapter four, five, six and nine respectively.

Thompson’s ethnographic style of presentation, which projects the voice of Zakaliya, the bark-cloth specialist and informant, as well as that of other parties who joined in the discussion, makes his article more informative. Thompson’s article implies and tends to support the view that a good number of men in Buganda were knowledgeable about the process of bark-cloth making. However, whether by error or choice, Thompson remains silent about the geographical area where his research was carried out, which makes it difficult for subsequent researchers to make use of his information in relation to any specific region of Buganda. Further, Thompson’s article was based on the observation of the practice of only one bark-cloth maker, Zakaliya. Inevitably, Thompson’s sample is inadequate and non-representational. Nevertheless, his application of the local terminologies used in the process of bark-cloth manufacture renders his text an important source for the current study, especially from a comparative perspective.

As Thompson, Kakooza employs a narrative approach. However, while Thompson projects the voice of the participants, Kakooza’s narrative is heavily informed by oral tradition which associates the history of bark-cloth to a legendary story of

Buyungo, the acclaimed discoverer of bark-cloth technology while on a hunting expedition. By playing the role of observer at the house of his unnamed friend, Kakooza gives a detailed description of the process of bark-cloth manufacture as well as the diverse functions of bark-cloth among the Baganda society.

2.4 Concluding the Chapter

This brief account of the scholarship on bark-cloth indicates that there still remains a wide scope for the analysis of the ways by which social, economic and political factors have affected and continue to influence the social organization of the bark-cloth industry of the Baganda. Most of the information available on the subject barely attempts an in-depth analysis of continuity and change of the role and meaning of bark-cloth as brought about by the changing social, economic, political and cultural contexts. The current study, therefore, aims to bridge the gaps in the scholarship of bark-cloth of the Baganda, paying closer attention to the factors that have influenced change and continuity in its production, use and meaning since the late-eighteenth century. This study also brings new insight into reviewing the social, political and economic history of Buganda, as important areas of focus in analyzing the historical relevance of the material culture of the Baganda.

3 SETTING THE SCENE: ABOUT BUGANDA, THE BAGANDA AND BARK-CLOTH

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the social, political, economic and geographical history of the kingdom of Buganda, in order to map out the significance of bark-cloth. I discuss the various theories relating to the origins of Buganda and analyze how these theories help to articulate the continuity and change of the bark-cloth industry. Section two focuses on the process of bark-cloth manufacture, and the associated social relations. I discuss the historical cultural functions of bark-cloth in the last part of the chapter. I highlight some of the transformations and retentions in the use of bark-cloth, which will be discussed at length in the subsequent chapters.

3.2 Historical Overview of Buganda

The kingdom of Buganda is located in the central-southern region of Uganda, on the northern and north-western shores of *Ennyanja Nnalubaale* (Lake Victoria).¹ The Baganda (inhabitants of Buganda) belong to the Bantu-speaking people who occupy much of eastern and southern Africa, but whose origin is said to be somewhere in western Africa around the Niger-Benue confluence (Posnanky 1961: 86-87; Iliffe 1995: 16-17) in the present Nigeria and Cameroon.² The early history of Buganda is not clearly known, as

¹ Lake Nnalubaale was later renamed Lake Victoria by the British colonialists, after the nineteenth-century British Queen, Victoria. For consistency, I therefore use the latter nomenclature.

² John Iliffe, an expert in African history and archeology, contends that more than 10,000 years ago the northern part of the African continent was much wetter than it is today. However, due to climatic changes

it has remained a contentious subject among scholars. However, based on clan oral traditions, some historians have argued that Buganda developed from a very humble beginning; initially as a small area on the northern shores of Lake Victoria inhabited by the Abalasangeye (Musisi 1991:53), also referred to as Bannansangwa (Kiwanuka 1971: 32) who were socially organized on kinship basis under independent clan³ structures. Information on these ancestors of the Baganda is very limited but it is believed that they lived in small settlements and nucleated villages separated by small rivers and forests (Wrigley 1957: 71; Musisi 1991: 53; Ray 1991: 3) in the present counties of Kyaddondo, Mawokota, Busiro and Kyaggwe⁴ (Kiwanuka 1971: 41). It is believed that Buganda grew both in population and territorial size following several waves of migration of people of heterogeneous origins that reached the peak between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries (Kiwanuka 1971: 31-43).

Kiwanuka asserts that the earliest and largest migration into Buganda happened around the thirteenth-century, comprised of people (thirteen clans) who came to Buganda via the eastern direction (1971: 32). According to the oral traditions of the Baganda, it is

that happened around 5000 BC, the Sahara began to experience a decline in rainfall. The desiccation of the Sahara, believed to have intensified from about 2500 BC, thus prompted the African-Mediterranean pastoral community who occupied this region to begin drifting southwards in search of water and pasture into the valleys draining into Lake Chad and River Niger. As they dispersed, they infringed on the territories of the agricultural Bantu-speaking population who, in turn, were forced to migrate southwards towards the forests of the Congo basin, and eastwards towards Western Sudan. Based on archeological evidence, it is believed that the Bantu eventually arrived in the Great Lakes region of East Africa around 1000 BC, via the eastern route (1995: 16-17). It is in this demographic shift in the northern region of the continent that historians find a clue to the origins of the kingdom of Buganda.

³ A clan represents a group of people who can trace their lineage to a common ancestor in some distant past. In Baganda customs, lineage is passed down along patrilineal lines. The clan essentially forms a large extended family composed of members of the paternal line, with a clan leader (*omukulu w'akasolya*) at the top, followed by successive divisions namely: *essiga*, *omutuba*, *olunyiriri* and finally at the bottom, the individual family unit, *enyumba* or *oluggya*. A clan can be identified according to its main totem (*omuziro*) and its secondary totem (*akabbiro*). There are about fifty clans in Buganda.

⁴ See plate 1.1 illustrating the geographical location and counties of Buganda in the introduction.

claimed that Kintu, a legendary founder of Buganda, led this first major wave of migration to Buganda. After fighting and defeating Bbemba Musota, a tyrant political figure in Buganda, during that time, Kintu coerced the indigenous population to unite with the foreign clans thereby establishing the kingdom of Buganda. Although he placed himself at the apex of the then new kingdom, Kintu is said to have left intact the social structure of the indigenous community and recognized the authority of the clan leaders. Of course this is only one version of the story, since other theories assert that Kintu was a Muganda who fled the tyrant regime and returned as heroic figure (Kabuga [1963] 1972). Yet other Kiganda oral traditions relate to Kintu as a mythical figure. It is claimed by the Baganda that Kintu and his sons disappeared into the forest, a claim that implies further migrations to other parts of the Great Lakes region. These divergent theories thus make the genesis of the Kingdom of Buganda a highly contentious subject open to further debate among scholars.

Still based on clan histories, Kiwanuka states that the second wave of migrations to Buganda was led by Kimera, the supposed third monarch of Buganda (see Appendix 3), and it comprised of ten clans that entered Buganda via the western borders with the neighbouring kingdom of Bunyoro (1971: 36- 37).⁵ Kiganda oral traditions contend that Kimera was a grandson of Kintu, and a sibling of Chwa Nabakka, Kintu's son, who spent some time in Bunyoro. Upon the disappearance of Chwa I, Kimera was brought back from Bunyoro to take over the throne of Buganda. Whereas it remains unclear whether Kimera was a direct descendant of Kintu or not, it is from the reign of Kimera that the dynastic chronology of the Kings of Buganda can be traced.

⁵ Bunyoro Kingdom dominated a bigger portion of the interlacustrine region but lost a significant portion of its territory to Buganda between the seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Buganda mounted a serious campaign for territorial expansion at the expense of her neighbours, especially Bunyoro, thus becoming the predominant kingdom, geographically, economically, and politically. Between the thirteenth and nineteenth centuries, Buganda expanded from three to eighteen counties. Of significance was Buddu, a former vassal state of Bunyoro, which was the most productive agricultural region, and the biggest producer of bark-cloth and other artefacts. The annexation of Buddu to Buganda during the last quarter of the eighteenth-century revolutionized the technology of bark-cloth production of the Baganda and gave rise to a lucrative bark-cloth industry in Buganda, as I discuss later in this chapter. Buganda concluded her quest for territorial expansion as late as the last decade of the nineteenth-century. With the assistance of the British, who had just signed in as the official “protectors” of the kingdom of Buganda, the counties of Buyaga and Bugangazzi⁶ were added to Buganda thus rounding up the number of Buganda counties to twenty covering about 19,600 square-miles. At present, the boundaries of Buganda extend northwards up to Lake Kyoga, eastwards to the banks of River Nile, westwards to the borders of the kingdoms of Ankole⁷ and Tooro, and southwards to the Uganda-Tanzania border.⁸

The landscape of Buganda is characterized by regular and evenly spaced hills and plateaus, between which lie rivers and swamps that make up its drainage system. Because

⁶ The counties of Buyaga and Bugangazzi were eventually returned to Bunyoro in 1967.

⁷ “Ankole” is a British corruption of “Nkore”, the original name of the kingdom in the present western Uganda. The kingdom was renamed “Ankole” after signing a treaty with the British colonial officials in 1901. The natives of Nkore are the Banyankore (sing. Munyankore), comprising of two classes namely: the Bahima, a pastoral society, and the Bairu, who are predominantly agriculturalists.

⁸ See plate 1.1 in the introduction, showing the map of Uganda and the geographical location of Buganda where research was undertaken.

of its geographical location across the equator, Buganda gets high rainfall almost throughout the year with two major wet seasons: *toggo*, which is the shorter season between March and May, and *ddumbi*, the longer season between September and December. The climate thus favours Buganda to be predominantly an agricultural region growing *matooke* (bananas) as the major food crop, sweet potatoes and cassava, and cereal crops like coffee, maize, sorghum, groundnuts and beans. Crop farming is often combined with livestock keeping; hence goats, sheep and chicken are common property of the Baganda. Within the banana and coffee plantations, the Baganda plant different types of fruit-bearing trees including among others mangoes, oranges, guavas, paw-paws, avocado and the renowned Jacobs-fruit. In addition, the Baganda plant a variety of *emituba* (sing. *omutuba*) (*ficus* species), for the production of bark-cloth, and to provide a shade for other plants.

3.2.1 Social Administrative Structure of Buganda

The social structure of Buganda can be divided into two principle domains namely: 1) *abaana b'engoma* (royals) under the leadership of the Kabaka (King), who is also the supreme head of the kingdom; and 2) *abakopi* (the common people), the subordinates of the Baganda royalty. The Kabaka is the political and symbolic centre upon whom, devolves all other aspects of the Baganda society. Thus the Kabaka assumed a trail of names signifying his social status and authority. Among other titles, the Kabaka is addressed as Ssaabasajja (the Greatest of all men), Magulu Nnyondo (the strongest and most stable), Musota (the Snake), Lukoma Nnantawetwa (the toughest and incorruptible), Mpologoma (the Lion), Bbaffe (husband of us all including men and women). Benjamin

Ray has noted that, “the King derived all his powers from the installation ceremonies that marked his accession to the throne” (1991: 105). Ray further asserts that, “The Kabaka’s extraordinary role as the pivotal figure of the kingdom placed him outside of the general community; he was made socially invisible and the object of the greatest fear and respect (*kitiibwa*), a kind of sacred personage whose exalted status was maintained by the ceremonial treatment accorded him at court and by his arbitrary power of life and death over his subjects” (Ray 1991: 106).

Equally important are, the *Nnamasole* (Queen-mother) and the *Lubuga* (Queen-sister), bestowed with the executive administration of the kingdom. The trio, constitute the apex of the Buganda royalty which is supported by a bureaucratic network comprising of the *bakopi* at various hierarchies including: the *Kattikiro* (prime minister), *abakungu* (senior administrative chiefs), *abamasaza* (county chiefs), *abamagombolola* (sub-county chiefs), *abemiluka* (area chiefs), *abaami b’ebyalo* (village chiefs), down to the individual family units of the commoners, who are generally classified as *abakopi* even though this term is embracing all the Baganda who are not members of the royal family.

Until the time of British colonial rule, the Kabaka owned the land and everything therein; therefore, it was the responsibility of the *bakopi* under their various clans and social hierarchies, to furnish the royal centre with adequate resources and manpower, in order to maintain and protect the expansive kingship structure, which comprised of *abalangira* (princes), *abambejja* (princesses), and *bakembuga* (the royal harem), who were in hundreds. The *bakopi* carried out various activities (social, economic, religious, political and cultural) in the service of the Kabaka and for the protection and prosperity

of the *Kabakaship*, which signified the quintessence of the Baganda society. The royal palace was both the centre of communication within the kingdom and the source of wealth (Ray 1991: 106), and the road network in Buganda led to the Kabaka's palace where, royal taxes in form of livestock, agricultural produce, and technological products like hoes, spears, pots, baskets, musical instruments and bark-cloths, from various counties of Buganda and the tributary states, were delivered. In this research, I focus on bark-cloth, one of many technological products that became initially closely associated with the Buganda royalty, but later transcended the royal boundaries to become a source of social and economic prosperity of the general populace.

3.3 Historicity of the Technology of Bark-cloth-Making in Buganda

It is not possible to state with any certainty the origins of the tradition of bark-cloth making in Buganda. While some scientists can confirm that numerous *mituba* species are indigenous in Buganda [Eggeling 1951; Ipulet 1993], we cannot state precisely when the *ficus natalensis* was first domesticated for purposes of bark-cloth production. Hence, the antiquity of bark-cloth in Buganda has remained open to continuous debate among scholars and the Baganda themselves. Several theories relating to the origins of bark-cloth production in Buganda have been presented. The first theory attributes the origins of bark-cloth to Kintu, the historical founder of the kingdom of Buganda. Proponents of the Kintu theory state that on his way to Buganda, Kintu brought the [bark-cloth] tree as well as people skilled in making bark-cloth, with him. Kintu is said to have led the very first and largest group that migrated to Buganda from beyond the eastern bank of the River Nile, around the thirteenth century. However, there is very little

evidence directly linking bark-cloth production to the Nilotic peoples, who are said to have constituted the eastern wave of migrants to Buganda. Thus, it is very difficult to draw any conclusions based on the Kintu theory.

The second theory associates the discovery of bark-cloth technology to the descendants of the *ngonge* (otter) clan (Kaggwa 1905; Kakooza 1950; and Makumbi 1976). The historical narrative that has been widely circulated among the Baganda states that a member of the *ngonge* clan⁹ landed on this historical discovery by accident when he hammered a piece of bark, which he had collected from the forest while on a hunting expedition. To his surprise, instead of breaking, the bark became pliable and more than doubled in width. Surprised by the discovery, he quickly returned to the forest for another bark and repeated the experiment. He then confirmed his discovery and presented the inaugural piece of bark-cloth to a princess, who subsequently presented it to the Kabaka. The inventor was honoured and given a high post at the royal palace. The story ends by stating that from then on, members of the *ngonge* clan became the official royal bark-cloth makers.¹⁰

This narrative is linked with further historical evidence that Kisolo, a member of the *ngonge* clan, held the post of Prime Minister during Kintu's reign. However, evidence from the field reveals that the duty of royal bark-cloth production is not exclusively assigned to members of the *ngonge* clan. Other members of the *kobe* (yam)

⁹ Several names were used by several sources to refer to the inventor of bark cloth. Some referred to him by the names of Wamala (Kakooza 1945), Kaboggoza (Makumbi 1976) or Kinkumu (Field interviews in Buddu). What is clear is that the three names above are typically identified with members of the *ngonge* clan.

¹⁰ Most of the informants interviewed agreed to the above story. However, they associated it with Kintu's reign yet Reid (2002) relates the story to Kimera's reign.

and *mpologoma* (lion) clans also share the responsibility of processing bark-cloth for royal purposes. For example, Emmanuel Busuulwa Kinyanyambali of the *kobe* clan was responsible for processing the *olubugo olusumika* Kabaka (bark-cloth used during the royal accession ritual) worn by Ronald Muwenda Mutebi II, on his Coronation day on July 31, 1993 (interview, 2002). Similarly, the production of the royal accession bark-cloth worn by the *Lubuga* (Queen-sister) was a responsibility of Lubyayi, head of the *essiga* (sub-lineage) of the *mpologoma* clan.¹¹

The third theory links the development of bark-cloth technology to the Bacwezi¹² a cattle-keeping migrant population from the northeast that came to Buganda about the same period as Kintu, but perhaps due to geographical factors, moved on westwards and settled in Nkore (Were 1968). The problem with this theory lies in the fact that the Bacwezi were a pastoral people and had plenty of animals, which certainly provided hides and skins for dress. For that reason, it is very unlikely that they invented the technology of bark-cloth production. Elly Tumwiine (1977), in his research on the art of the Bahima¹³ who are believed to be descendants of the Bacwezi, argues that “the introduction of bark-cloth, *ebitooma*, came with the Baganda traders [in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries], who brought them to the King’s palace in search of

¹¹ ‘Gye Nvudde’, a CBS Radio program on the history of Buganda broadcasted on 12/8/2002 by Senga Nakibuule. The program started at 11:30pm ended at 1:00am.

¹² The Bacwezi were members of the Cwezi kingdom, which, according to historians, was established out of several independent social groups comprising mainly of Bantu-speaking communities that occupied the region around the shores of Lake Victoria between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries.

¹³ The Bahima is a pastoral society that forms about one tenth of the population of Ankole and were organized under the leadership of their king *Omugabe*. The term “Hima” is used in scholarship to denote anything relating to the Bahima, as in Hima huts, Hima patterns etc.

favours...” (1977: 63-68). He further argues that animal skins were the historic source of fabric for the Hima (ibid).

The fourth theory postulates that the Baganda learnt the technology of bark-cloth production from their neighbours the Banyoro¹⁴. However, as Roscoe states, the difficulty in accepting this theory is that bark-cloth does not grow freely in the regions that constitute the current boundaries of Bunyoro (1911: 403), and since the eighteenth-century, many people in the Great lakes region, including the Banyoro, relied on the Baganda for bark-cloth (Reid 2002:70; Schweinfurth et al 1888: 119-20). While we cannot draw any conclusions on the origins of bark-cloth in Buganda based on the social or geographical history of Buganda, it is plausible to argue that the Baganda sharpened their skills in bark-cloth production after contact with the Bannabuddu (inhabitants of Buddu), in the eighteenth century. Buddu was an important region because of its richness in both human and natural resources.

First, Buddu had the most favourable climate for agricultural and livestock farming. Secondly, Buddu had iron deposits, which were required for making various farming and war implements, and the Bannabuddu were generally better smiths than the Baganda. Above all, Buddu had the highest developed technology in bark-cloth production in the region. Hence, for over two centuries, the Baganda made several attempts to annex Buddu to their kingdom without much success. It was not until the eighteenth-century that Kabaka Junju (c.1764-1779) finally annexed Buddu to Buganda after numerous wars. Kabaka Ssemakookiro (c.1779-1794), who succeeded Junju, revolutionized the Baganda bark-cloth industry, by ordering all the people in the kingdom, to plant enough bark-cloth trees in their gardens and to produce enough bark-

¹⁴ The Banyoro are the inhabitants of the Bunyoro kingdom that surrounds the western border of Buganda.

cloth for the needs of their families, and the kingdom. In addition, he threatened a big penalty for those who neglected to do so (Reid (2002:73); Lugira (1970:58); Roscoe (1911:403)).

Further, the Bannabuddu were assimilated into the Buganda royal system and were made the official suppliers of bark-cloth to the royal palace. To the present date, in 2005, the best bark-cloth still comes from Buddu. The aesthetic quality of bark-cloth from Buddu was in its soft feel and a rich terracotta brown hue, which attracted the appreciation of the Baganda. Although the historical methods of bark-cloth making in Buganda are very obscure, we can argue that the Baganda gained enormous experience in bark-cloth production after contact with Buddu. Informants concurred that the process of softening the bark by way of steaming, which renders the bark fabric softer and of a rich terracotta-brown hue, popularly known as *embugo eza Kimote*, was originally exclusive to the Bannabuddu. The bark-cloth made by the Baganda was of a rough texture and generally lighter in colour.

3.3.1 Classification of *Emituba* (Ficus Species), the Source of Bark-cloth in Buganda

The *mituba* (*omutuba* sing.), referred to here as bark-cloth trees, belong to the phylum *spermatophyte*, class *angiospermae*, family *moraceae*, and genus *ficus* (Ipulet 1993: 1). In the wild, the majority of the *ficus* species start life as epiphytes, becoming self-supporting after the death of their host plant, whose end is usually hastened by their strangulating embraces (Eggeling 1951[1940]; Hamilton 1981; Ipulet 1993). According to scientific evidence, *ficus* species have a rare property of increasing the soil humidity in their immediate vicinity (Eggeling 1951: 238), perhaps the reason why the Baganda tend

to plant such hygrophilous plants as coffee, in their shade. The *mituba* trees can grow up to forty feet high, forming a thick canopy of broad and glabrous green leaves, measuring about 4 inches long and 3 inches wide. They usually have a smooth and grey trunk; about ten feet long, with aerial roots suspended from the base of the major branches. They grow easily from cuttings and stakes, and for a long time, the Baganda have planted them in this way, around their homesteads and in their gardens. There are over thirty varieties of *mituba* species but the commonly grown is the *ficus natalensis*, which is the main source of bark-cloth in Buganda. Among the Baganda, the *ficus natalensis* is known by different names dependent on the variation in the physical properties of the sub-species especially: the breadth of the leaves, the length of period it takes for the tree to mature, the softness or hardness of the bark when being processed to make bark-cloth, and the colour and overall quality of bark-cloth. The nomenclature may vary from one region to another. Based on field evidence, the common names of *ficus natalensis* include: 1) *butana*; 2) *enjeruka*; 3) *enkago*; 4) *enserere*; 5) *ensole*; 6) *entakire*; 7) *enteensa*; 8) *entojjo*; 9) *entuuma*; 10) *ssalalamira*; 11) *kampindi*; 12) *kirundu*; 13) *kyanjale*; and 14) *mpola embuzi*. Roscoe lists close to fifty names associated with the various sub-species of *ficus natalensis* available in Buganda at the dawn of the twentieth-century (1911: 404). William J. Eggeling has observed that “in the wild state the *mutuba* is a forest species usually found as an epiphyte, but owing to its importance as the chief source of bark-cloth and its widespread use as a live fence and as a shade tree for coffee, it is cultivated all over the Protectorate and is now found growing as an independent tree... in and around villages and on the site of old habitations” (1951: 255). Plate 3.1 illustrates a mature bark-cloth tree from the garden of Omulangira (prince) George William Kansere

of Kibanda village in Buddu County. The brown part of the bole is the area from which the bark has been harvested.



Plate 3.1 showing an example of a domesticated *mutuba* tree
Photo by the author

The *olusimbo* (stake) is planted about one foot below the surface and is tied next to the *kitooke* (banana-tree) to give it initial support, and to provide it with moisture. The banana plant will eventually die, leaving enough space for the growth of the stake, which is then nurtured by constantly trimming off the aerial roots to ensure proper growth of the bole, from which the bark-cloth is extracted. The stake usually takes about five years to mature, and by this age, the bole is approximately eight to ten feet high to the base of the branches, and can be harvested annually for about two decades. Another method of propagating bark-cloth trees is by indenting the root of the mature tree, causing it to

produce a new shoot that benefits directly from the soil nutrients of its mother plant. The new shoot will take a longer time to mature, (about six to seven years) although it will certainly be of good quality. This method is more common in Kakuuto and Kannabulemu sub-counties in Buddu. The farmers argue that this method helps to reduce the spread of diseases affecting *ficus* species, which are easily transmitted by planting stakes. Bark-cloth trees exude white or off-white latex, which is responsible for the coloration¹⁵ of the bark-cloth.

3.3.2 Harvesting of Bark-cloth

Harvesting of bark-cloth is carried out during the two rainy seasons in Buganda namely; during *toggo* (March- May), and *ddumbi*, (September-December) when the bark-cloth trees have got sufficient sap, a characteristic identified by a thick forest-green canopy. One of the bark-cloth makers explained to me that:

During the dry season, the bark-cloth tree usually does not have enough sap and stripping off the bark therefore becomes difficult. In addition, when it comes to processing, such a bark is usually difficult to manage as it splits easily and the fabric will not attain the required brownness due to lack of sufficient sap, which enables it to tan. But above all, harvesting bark-cloth during the dry season is dangerous for the tree as it is likely to dry. That is the reason why we harvest bark-cloth during the two rainy seasons; namely, *ddumbi*, and *toggo*.

(Mu biseera eby'omusana omutuba teguba na mazzi gamala era gutawanya oluyimbula. Ate ekirala olubugo bw'olukomaga lutawaanya kubanga telugonda bulungi mpozzi n'ensonga endala olw'okuba amazzi gaba mato, telumyuka kimala bw'olwanika kumusana. Naye ensonga esinga okuba enkulu eri nti omutuba okuguyimbula mu biseera eby'omusana oba ogutta kuba gukala. Yesonga lwaki tuyimbula mu biseera eby,enkuba; mu ddumbi ne mu toggo) (Luswata, interview, June 2002).

¹⁵ The coloration of bark cloth depends on the typology and age of the specie, as well as the season during which it is harvested. More details are given in our discussion in this chapter, on the process of bark cloth making.

The harvesting process begins by making an incision around the base of the bole and another one at the area where the branches split out. A longitudinal incision is then made from the top to the base of the bole, deep enough to go through the bark but not too deep to damage the wood. Using a sharpened banana stalk, the bark is carefully peeled off, by keeping the damage of both the bark and the tree at a minimum, as illustrated in plate 3.2.



Plate 3.2 Charles Luswata harvesting the bark of *omutuba*
Photo by the author

After harvesting, the bark is wrapped up and taken to the bark-cloth workshop where the processing takes place. Meanwhile, the exposed bole is carefully wrapped with green banana leaves (as illustrated in plate 3.3), to protect it from bacterial infections¹⁶, wind, and the tropical heat. Within three to four days, the banana-leaf bandage is removed to allow the new bark to regenerate freely, lest it begins to rot because of the humidity.



Plate 3.3 Luswata bandaging the skinned bole in order to protect it against possible damage
Photo by the author

¹⁶ The treatment against such bark infection is by smearing the bole with ripe bananas but in the past, cow dung was used to seal up the damaged parts.

During his visit to Buganda during the last quarter of the nineteenth-century, Emin Pasha noted in his diary that women stripped the bark from the trees while men beat out the bark to make cloth (as quoted in Schweinfurth 1888: 518). My research has not revealed any information to support Pasha's statement. In fact, according to several current bark-cloth makers, women were (and are still) considered as unclean amongst the Baganda because of their menstrual cycle, and therefore, cannot be allowed to participate in any process of bark-cloth manufacture. Several bark-cloth makers explained to me that there was a general belief among the Baganda that women have a potential to contaminate the bark-cloth trees and can cause them to dry, if they touched the tree while in their menstrual periods. Hence, to ensure the longevity and continued productivity of the trees, women were barred from getting in contact with any tools used in the manufacture of bark-cloth. In order to elucidate this point, I cite a few statements from my interviews, in relation to women's participation in bark-cloth manufacture. For instance, Sam Ssebaale stresses:

Whereas nowadays women help us to patch up the damaged bark-clothes, in the past, a woman was not allowed at all even to touch the mallet of her husband or the knife he used to strip the bark, or to sit or to jump over the *mukomago* (wooden beam upon which the bark processing is carried out); because of the reasons associated with your femininity [menstruation], which you very well know. You see, there was a belief among bark-cloth makers that women who were in that condition, could cause the bark-cloth tree to dry.

(Weewawo kati abyakyala batuyambako okutungirira embugo, edda ng'omukazi ttakirizibwa nakatono kukwata ku nsaamo ya bba oba omwambe gwakozesa okuyimbula emituba, oba okubuuka oba okutuula ku mukomago olw'ensonga zammwe ez'abakyala nawe z'omanyi obulungi, anti abakomazi bagambanga nti omukyala ali mu mbeera eyo ng'ayinza okusobya omutuba n'egukala) (interview, June, 2002).

Further Eneriko Kambaza, said:

As far as women's participation in bark-cloth production is concerned, I have no idea at all; what I know is that the main responsibility of women was to plant food for the family and to cook.

(Eky'abakyala okuyimbula emituba, ekyo ssikimanyiddeko ddala wano mu Buganda, omulimu ogwabwe gw'abanga gwa kufumba n'okulima emmere) (interview, September, 2002).

Similarly, Yoana Lwanga argued:

No, No, No my daughter [referring to me], what would women be doing near the bark-cloth house? They would only get there, while bringing food, tea, banana juice or roasted plantains to the bark-cloth makers

(Nedda nedda mwana wange, abakyala baagendanga ku kolayo ki mu kkomagiro? Okujjako baaleetanga mmere na kwokya gonja, mpozzi n'okuleeta omubisi oba Chai eri abakomazi) (interview June 2002).

3.3.3 Treatment of the Bark Prior to the Beating Process

After harvesting, the bark undergoes a number of processes, which determine the quality of the bark-cloth. These processes include softening and coloration treatment. Different regions employ different methods of softening the harvested bark, prior to the actual beating process (*okukomaga*). Similarly, the feel and coloration of the fabric heavily depends on the selected treatment of the bark. This study presents five different methods of bark treatment known and practiced by various people in the different counties of Buganda where bark-cloth is produced. The first and most popular method is by way of steaming, *okufumba*¹⁷, which is similar in principles, to the studio process of steaming fibre-reactive dyed textiles. Thus the Baganda generally refer to steamed bark-cloth as *olubugo olufumbe* (*embugo enfumbe* pl.). However, a new terminology

¹⁷ In Luganda, language of the Baganda, the term *okufumba* also means to cook or to boil, to create, to concoct.

olwakimote (*eza kimote* pl.) was coined to refer to steamed bark-cloth, which was predominantly produced in Buddu.

According to oral history, Kimote was a nineteenth-century chief of Sango, in Kannabulemu sub-county, in Buddu. As the system had been at that time, the Baganda were required to provide labour services and to give part of their produce as tribute to the monarchy, through their respective county chiefs. Hence, it was a common practice for the chiefs to spend several months at the royal capital, attending to state duties. For that reason, caravans from various counties, used to bring supplies necessary for the royal duties, and for the maintenance of the chiefs and their men during their stay at the royal capital. Caravans from Buddu were commonly loaded with high quality bark-cloth, which was much softer and of a richer hue as compared to the type produced in other counties. Thus, whenever the Bannabuddu arrived at the royal capital, the Baganda from other counties would say: “Abe Buddu baleese embugo za Kimote”, meaning “the caravan from Buddu has arrived with bark-cloth from Kimote’s chieftainship”. From then, bark-cloth from Buddu was associated with Kimote. Reciprocally, Kimote also came to be associated with the high technology of bark-cloth production¹⁸. The process of making *kimote* is as follows:

After scraping off the outer coat, the bark is wrapped in a parcel of fresh banana leaves and steamed in a cooking pot for about twenty- five minutes. In order to prevent the bark from direct contact with the boiling water, a cushion of split banana stalks is placed in the cooking pot. The rolled and wrapped bark is centred in the cooking utensil and cushioned from all sides with plenty of fresh banana leaves, to keep it in place and to

¹⁸ The generic name for bark cloth in Buddu was *omusala* but the general term *olubugo* has now been adopted throughout Buganda.

trap the steam. Several layers of banana leaves are then used to cover the top to ensure a proper seal as illustrated in plate 3.4.



Plate 3.4 Preparations for steaming the bark. Photo by the author

The pot is raised on to three cooking tripods (*amasiga*) and a bonfire is set. The cooking is done until steam begins to escape through the banana-leaf padding. The bark is left to cool down before the beating process begins. Secondly, similar results can be achieved by wrapping up the bark in plenty of layers of banana leaves and the parcel is then covered in a pit of hot ash, a method known as *okuvumbika*. This method was more common in Singo County but has now been phased out (Kambaza, interview, September 2002). Thirdly, the bark parcel can be roasted over red charcoal as in a barbeque, a method commonly applied in Bukulula and Kalungu sub-counties in Buddu. Fourthly,

some bark-cloth makers have devised a method of simply dipping the bark in a hot-water bath for about one hour prior to the beating process. However, many informants acknowledged that this method is not in anyway comparable to the proper steaming methods mentioned above.

The fifth method of bark treatment is by burning off the outer coat of the bark using dry banana leaves (see plate 3.5). Contrary to the steaming processes already discussed above, which help to improve the saturation of the hue to terracotta brown, the burning method (*okubabula*) restrains the “browning” of the bark-cloth, thus maintaining a light-brown hue. Once the bark has been harvested, it is placed, inner coat (*ku mazzi*) facing down on a banana-leaf carpet. The entire length of the bark is then covered with plenty of dried banana leaves or any dry grass to facilitate the heat process.



Plate 3.5 Luswata demonstrates the burning process. Photo by the author

The sixth method and perhaps the most indigenous to Buganda, is by keeping the bark in a damp condition and during the initial beating process, the bark is continuously moistened with water in order to keep it soft and prevent the fibres from splitting. Whichever method is used, the Baganda have maintained a higher position in bark-cloth technology in East Africa. Pasha has emphasized that the production of bark-cloth had its principle seat in Buganda (as cited in Schweinfurth 1888: 119), a claim that has apparently been supported by John Picton and John Mack, who state that, “Nowhere else in Africa was bark-cloth production so extensive that it could generate as comprehensive a typology or provide a material expression of the differing status of the individuals within a community (1979: 43). Before going into further details of processing bark-cloth, it is important that I describe the environment in which bark-cloth is manufactured and the tools used.

3.3.4 Bark-cloth Workshop

The bark-cloth workshop is constructed in the banana grove, close to the residence. A beam made out of hardwood¹⁹ measuring about twelve feet long, six to eight inches in width, and about twelve inches in height, is firmly embedded in the ground. The top, which forms the working surface, is made flat and smooth. A shelter with a grass-thatched roof is then constructed around it, suspended from four poles. Walls made out of grass or dry-banana leaves are erected on the three sides of the workshop, leaving the front elevation open, to allow light and circulation of fresh air.²⁰ The mallets, used to beat

¹⁹ Several tree species can be used for the beam including: the *omusasa* (*sapium ellipticum*), *olusambya* (*markhamia platycalyx*), *omuzzanvuma* (*sapium mannianum*) or *omuyembe* (mango-tree).

²⁰ Some more permanent workshops are now constructed out of bricks.

the bark, are made out of different tree-species but the most commonly used are *enzo* (*teclea nobilis*) and *omusaali* (*mimusops ugandensis* or *garcinia buchananii*). The mallets are carved in varying length, weight, and size of grooves, according to the various functions they are intended to perform. Generally, the mallets used for bark processing in Buganda can be classified into three categories: *ensamo esaaka* (the biggest and heaviest mallet with deep grooves used in the initial process), *ensamo etenga* (the medium-sized mallet with shallower grooves), and *ensaamo enzituzo* (the smallest-sized mallet with fine grooves, used for the final beating of bark-cloth). The ensemble of mallets described above, perform a crucial function of intermeshing the fibres of the bark, thereby extending it in length and width and gradually turning it into a soft fabric.

3.3.5 Processing of Bark-cloth

Once the bark has been treated, the processing of bark-cloth then begins. Basically, bark-cloth is made by way of felting; a method through which the fibres of the bark are compressed to form a soft fabric that can serve similar purposes as textiles. Because the fibres of the *ficus* bark run longitudinally, by laying the bark on the *omukomago* (adze-beam), and beating it for several hours with a set of wooden mallets described above, enables the fibres to soften and mesh together into a continuous structure. This process usually takes between three to five hours, depending on the size of the fabric and the number of bark-cloth makers involved. Further, because the fibres of the *ficus* bark grow in a longitudinal manner, the bark tends to extend more in width about four or five times the original size while the length can only extend by one tenth. The elaborate process of bark-cloth making can be summarized as follows: First, the bark is unrolled piece-by-

piece onto the beam and beaten with considerable energy using a heavy mallet (*ensaamo esaaka*), which is positioned diagonally to prevent the bark from splitting, as has been illustrated in plate 3.6 below.



Plate 3.6 Initial diagonal beating to prevent the bark from splitting. Photo by the author

Both sides of the bark are carefully beaten in two rounds (*okusaaka emisaako ebiri*) on each side, beginning with the lower part that was at the base of the bole (*ku musa*), towards the top part (*ku matabi*). The bark is then folded in two parts. Using a medium-sized mallet, the *omukomazi* further beats the bark while holding the mallet in an upright position (*okutenga*) in order to ensure that the loosened fibres are properly intermeshed. At this stage, the bark begins to get softer. In order to prevent it from tearing apart, and to

achieve an even weight, the bark fabric is folded further into a smaller pile as the beating process continues. Because the bark generates some considerable amount of liquid (*obuleebo*) during the beating process, it is exposed at intervals to the sun for about fifteen minutes to allow the excess liquid to evaporate, and thereafter, the bark-cloth is laid back onto the *omukomago* for further beating. Special attention is paid to the textural quality of the fabric. Using the *ensaamo enzituzo*, the fabric is meticulously beaten (*okuttula*) in order to clear out any remaining lumps. This process of *okuttula*, as George Kyeyune has observed, “was often enhanced by relevant poetry and music” (2003: 45). Hence, by beating the fabric in a consistent rhythm, the fabric eventually attains a fine texture, which makes it aesthetically appealing. The intermeshing process is finalized when the bark has turned into a soft fabric depending on the purpose it is intended to serve. Roscoe mentioned that the “bark-cloths that were intended for use on beds were left much thicker than those intended for wear” (1911: 406).

Because bark-cloth making is such an elaborate process, teamwork is common involving both experienced bark-cloth makers and several apprentices. J. W. Channel acknowledges that, “Beating out the bark-cloth is hard work. The craftsman squats down on the floor, picks up the mallet and threads the bark through his legs onto the *musasa*, at the same time hammering the bark. No time is lost and the mallet is thrown from hand to hand and each blow is angled to avoid splitting the bark. Skill and knowledge are needed if the finished product is to be of any value” (1962:154). However, A. D. F. Thompson refers to the process of bark-cloth making as “simple, quick and inexpensive” (1934: 17) perhaps in comparison to the weaving process.

3.3.6 Finishing Process

Upon completion of the beating process, the bark-cloth is stretched flat in an open area (*ekyano*) and secured tightly with some heavy stones placed at close intervals of about 15cm (see plate 3.7). The purpose of spreading out the newly made bark-cloth in the sun is to improve its colour-quality. Once exposed to air and sunlight, the bark-cloth slowly begins to change colour progressively from beige to a terracotta brown hue, a process that can take several hours or days, depending on the weather.



Plate 3.7 The Browning Process. Photo by the author

According to scientific explanation, the browning of bark-cloth is a biochemical process in which the phenolic compounds²¹ present in the tissue of the *ficus*-bark are subjected to enzymatic²² reaction thereby converting into a brown pigment. The mechanism of pigment formation from phenolic substrates is not fully understood. However, the general process of pigmentation is known to involve enzymatic oxidation, rearrangement of groups, non-enzymatic oxidation, non-oxidative transformations, and polymerization. Scientists argue that, the enzyme, polyphenol oxidase (PPO) is a necessary factor in the initial phase of the browning process because it catalyses the conversion of monophenols to diphenols, which are then converted to highly reactive coloured *o*-quinones. These, in turn, react with other *o*-quinones, amino acids, and reducing sugars thereby forming unstable hydroxyquinones which are further oxidized non-enzymatically to a dark brown pigment (Hui 1992a: 223-229). *O*-quinones, formed from phenolic compounds by phenolases (enzymes) are therefore the precursors of the brown colour. Extensive research on the subject of enzymatic browning has been carried out in the past century (Guilbaut 1970; Walker and Wilson 1975; Khan 1977; Mayer and Harel 1979). However, more attention has thus far focused on analysing the process of enzymatic browning and seeking ways to control the discoloration in food products, mainly fruits and vegetables.²³

²¹ Phenolic compounds are substrates catalysed by the enzyme polyphenol oxidase (phenolase) thus causing a browning reaction in cut or damaged plant tissues and fruits (Hui 1992:224).

²² Enzymes are biological catalysts that enable complex reactions to take place at ordinary temperatures. The main factors responsible for the initial velocity of an enzymatic reaction include among others: enzyme concentration, the substrate concentration (substance on which an enzyme acts), pH, temperature, activators, inhibitors, and ionic strength. For details see George Guilbaut 1970.

²³ Also refer to website <http://food.oregonstate.edu/flavor/phenol1.html>.

While the above information does not directly relate to bark-cloth, it enables us to understand more clearly this process of enzymatic browning, which is a crucial factor in the technology and aesthetics of bark-cloth among the Baganda. Through the beating process, the tissues of the *figus* bark are disrupted and destroyed, thus allowing the phenolic compounds to come in contact with the PPO which causes the bark-cloth to brown. The intensity of the brown hue depends both on the concentration of phenolic compounds available in the *figus* bark (*obukulu bw'amazzi mu mutuba*), and the time of exposure of the bark-cloth to ultra-violet rays of the sun. When the desired intensity has been achieved, the bark-cloth is processed further in order to clear out the loose particles, and to improve its feel. It is also at this stage that the holes caused by the natural scars in the bark are mended. The damaged area is cut away in a square format and patched up with a fabric of a similar hue, carefully sewn together with a plantain-fibre or raffia. The bark-cloth is then washed, rinsed (plate 3.8) and spread out again to dry. It is beaten for the last time with a heavy blunt mallet to clear out the creases and to render it soft.



Plate 3.8 John Bbaale demonstrates the washing process.
Photo by the author

An alternative method is by rubbing and kneading the bark-cloth by hand until it becomes tender. The finished fabric is neatly trimmed in a rectangular format and is ready for use. According to the aesthetics of the Baganda, as one informant explicitly mentioned, “a high quality bark-cloth must be of a rich red-brown colour, soft and pliable, with minimum patches” (“olubugo olulungi lwelwo olumyukidde ddala obulungi, nga lugonda ate nga teruliimu bipaapi”) (Ssemukasa, interview, June 2002). It is noteworthy that the Baganda have an aesthetic preference for brown, which is the principle yardstick for beauty. Because of their diversified historical background, the

Baganda vary in height, complexion and other physical features. However, the majority of the Baganda are of a fairly dark complexion (*baddugavu*), and for that reason, they tend to have special appreciation for people of a fairly lighter complexion (brown), which they regard as the most perfect skin pigmentation. The Ganda concept of beauty has been elaborately analysed by Lugira Muzzanganda (1970: 31- 40). In this chapter, I only focus on the concept of “brownness”, as articulated in the Ganda aesthetic language.

In order to emphasize the aesthetics of brownness, the Baganda devised comparative statements that continue to apply in 2005. A common example is a reference to the beauty of fair-skinned women, whom the Baganda describe as: “*yamyuka ng’endeku*”, meaning, “She is as red (brown) as a gourd²⁴” or “*mumyufu ng’ettunguli*”, that “her complexion is almost comparable to the colour of *ettungulu* (*sasa tissellata*).²⁵ In order to improve their skin complexion, some Baganda women often smeared themselves with ochre from the white-ant mounds (*ettaka ly’ekiswa*). Their complexion blended well with the brick-red brown colour of bark-cloth.

3.4 Historical-Cultural Importance of Bark-cloth

Bark-cloth has played various roles through history including among others: as a vestment both for the living and the dead, as a material for interior design and decoration, for storage of valuables, and as an economic product. However, in this section, I look at the role of bark-cloth in Buganda prior to external contact. This section offers a backdrop

²⁴ A gourd is a small calabash container customarily used for serving local beer. When properly polished, it gains a reddish-brown colour that is comparable to the hue of bark cloth.

²⁵ *Ettungulu* (*sasa tissellata*) is a red acidic fruit from the swamps, and it was very much appreciated by the Baganda, because of its appearance.

on which I examine aspects of continuity and change in the role and meaning of bark-cloth in the proceeding chapters.

3.4.1 Sartorial Functions of Bark-cloth prior to External Contact

One of the functions of bark-cloth, until the early twentieth-century, was for purposes of dress. Because of its wider dimensions and softness, bark-cloth replaced animal hides and skins, which constituted the earlier means of clothing in Buganda. An ethno-historical account of dress and costume in Buganda, from the earliest time, until the discovery of bark-cloth, has been documented by several scholars including: Kaggwa (1905), Roscoe (1911), Lugira (1970) and Kjaer (1995). We can deduce from their reports that the choice of dress was generally contingent on the availability of materials, the most rare and precious ones being reserved for royal usage.²⁶

Historically, bark-cloth in Buganda was considered as a garb of royalty, initially worn only by the Kabaka, members of the royal family, and some great chiefs (Lugira

²⁶ Before the “invention” of bark-cloth, the Baganda used various types of animal skin and hides in order to differentiate people of various social ranks, age and sex. For example, only the Kabaka dressed in leopard skin. The chiefs were identified by cowhides, while the ordinary unclassified Baganda (referred to as the *bakopi*), dressed in skins of smaller animals like antelopes, bushbucks and goats. Among the *bakopi*, those who attained positions of responsibility at the royal palace were identified by way of dress. The royal guards, for example, were clad in antelope-skin, slung over the right shoulder, passed under the left arm, and tied round the waist with a plantain-fiber girdle (Roscoe 1911:201). The warriors put on a finely dressed [goat] skin with the hair shaved off it, hanging toga-wise from the shoulder, with a girdle around the waist and an apron made out of a serval-cat-skin (*emmondo*). The general was distinguished from other warriors by a leopard-skin apron and a helmet made out of banana fibers designed in black and white strips, signifying that he was the King’s representative (Lugira 1970: 60). Priests and mediums dressed in white goatskin while the lowest commoners draped in coloured goatskins.

In terms of gender and age, women (including the aristocrats) dressed in two skins (*enkebo*), flowing down to the ankles, held with a string around the waist. The young girls on the contrary, used to wear a waist-girdle made by threading tubular stalks of a shrub known as *ekiwondowondo* (*maesa lanceolata forsk*). Men usually wrapped two small pieces around the loin area, over which they draped toga-wise, a large skin, which was well knotted on the right hand shoulder. As for the small boys, they wore a goatskin, slung around their shoulders. With the discovery of bark cloth, animal hides and skins ceased to be an important fabric in Baganda.

1970:57). Oral tradition asserts that Kintu's (the alleged first Kabaka of Buganda) dress consisted of two pieces of bark-cloth; one knotted on the right shoulder, and another on the left. Following Kintu, this ritualistic dress code has been maintained to the present as part of the official coronation regalia of the Kabaka. In addition to the two pieces of bark-cloth, the Kabaka also drapes in a leopard skin as illustrated in plate 3.9.



Plate 3.9 Investiture of Mutebi II on his Coronation as the 36th Kabaka of Buganda
Note the bark-cloth and leopard skin. Courtesy of P. N. Ssengendo

While analysing the purpose of rituals, Goodman Nelson mentions that, “ritual gestures denote or represent historical occurrence [as well as] occurrences thought to be historical” (as cited in Scheffler 1997:129). Similarly, Israel Scheffler notes that ritual

processes incorporate multiple symbols which “together serve to mark out a structure of historical time, space, and community [thereby] bring[ing the] ‘performers’ minds into regular contact with symbolized properties thus influencing their concepts and sensibilities” (ibid). Lugira asserts that in addition to the Kabaka, “it was [also] considered a matter of etiquette that all princesses and women [in] the king’s court should wear nothing but barkcloth” (1970:57). Based on my field interviews with some members of the Baganda royal domain, the *bakembuga* (royal women) dressed in two layers of bark-cloth which served as undergarments, over which they wrapped a third piece from below the armpits, draping down to the ankles. The bark-cloth was tied securely around the waistline with *olwebagyo* (a sash of bark-cloth), normally of a lighter tone. Plate 3.10 illustrates this dress tradition although the sashes used in this case, are made out of woven cloth.



Plate 3.10 Baganda women dressed in bark-cloth as according to the historical sartorial style. Note that the sashes in the picture are made out of modern woven fabric, Photo by the author

As Katarina Kikome, a descendant of one of the royal wives of Kabaka Muteesa I, explained to me, all women (females) at the Kabaka's palace almost dressed alike. However, the only exception, was that the *bakembuga* (royal wives), were identified by the fact that they used not to secure their clothes with a sash. After wrapping the bark-cloth around their body from below the armpit, the *bakembuga* gathered the remaining part of the bark-cloth into medium sized pleats, which they held securely under the armpit, as Nandyose Mukondo, a *muzaana* (royal servant) demonstrates in plate 3.11. Kikome further explained that it was always a difficult task for the royal wives to maintain the pleats while walking about. As such, a saying was coined that “*eddyā eddungi telikukkiriza kwesibya lwebagyo*”, an equivalent of the English saying: “smartness knows no comfort” (interview, October, 2002).



Plate 3.11 Nnandyose Mukondo, a royal servant at Wamala Tombs, demonstrates the dress style of the royal wives
Photo by the author

Apart from the members of the royal family, a few royal servants also shared the privilege of wearing bark-cloth because of the special duties they performed at the palace. These included diviners, chiefs, and court musicians and dancers. According to Lugira, the vestments of the diviners consisted of two pieces of bark-cloth, worn in toga style almost like the Kabaka, and nine white goatskins worn over the bark-clothes, from around the waist (1970:23). One informant told me that because the diviners were responsible for protecting the life of the Kabaka and the Buganda kingship, they were accorded the privilege to dress in two pieces of bark-cloth (anonymous interview, October, 2002). Moreover, among other duties, the diviners had to see to it that “the crops grow, that children thrive, that their worshipers prosper, that wars are won, that the family, the clan and the country flourish” (Lugira 1970:164).

The sartorial code for the chiefs constituted of bark-cloth (dressed in toga style) covered with a well-dressed cowhide, and securely tied with a sash. Kaggwa, a former royal page and *Kattikiro* (prime minister) of Buganda contends that, “Abasajja ba Kabaka kye baavanga bayambala amaliba g’ente nga bagenda mu lubiri kwe kussamu abakyala ba Kabaka ekitiibwa nga balabika mu maaso gaabwe nti, ‘Be baweereza Kabaka’” (1999 [1905]: 224), literal meaning (“the reason why the royal chiefs dressed in bark-cloth and cowhides was principally to give respect to the royal wives, by presenting themselves in a way that signified that they were indeed the servants of the Kabaka”). The royal court musicians and dancers were another important social group that historically shared the privilege of dressing in bark-cloth. Dressed in toga style, the royal dancers tied a longhaired goatskin around the waist. Roscoe wrote that, “When the king engaged a new drummer...he gave him a woman, a cow, and a load of barkcloths” (1911:30). Whereas

to an ordinary Muganda this form of dress may have been a sign of prestige and a psychological sense of proximity to the royal centre, it also had other social connotations associated with dominance and subordination, as well as continence and sexuality, which were important elements in the conceptualization of gender and power in Buganda. By prescribing fabrics and styles of dress that were less glamorous as compared to his own, it was a conscious intention of the Kabaka to subdue the self image of these chiefs, and arguably, in order to control their sexual potency. After all, one should not forget that the Kabaka had a lot more Queens in his harem than the biological limitations of humanity would allow him to deal with. Analyzing the various forms of dress at the royal domain from this perspective helps to shed more light on the unique socio-gender constructions in Buganda, which restrict the man-status only to the Kabaka. Therefore all other males in the kingdom, while at the palace, had to subsume their man gender, and referred to the Kabaka as “*Bbaffe*”, meaning, “Husband of us all” (including males and females): as soon as they left the palace, they reclaimed their biological status as men.²⁷

As I argue, dress played an important role not only in maintaining gender and social differences but also as a marker of power relations. Moreover, Susan B. Kaiser, a social psychologist and specialist in the psychology of dress, correctly states that clothes rarely convey single meanings; more often, their messages may be described as consisting of *layers of meaning*, with some layers more applicable than others in a specific context (1997:241). Similarly, Jane Schneider and Annette B. Weiner, textile historians, assert that throughout history, cloth has been central to the social and political organization of various societies. They note that, “In the form of clothing and adornment,

²⁷ For a critical discussion on the conceptualization of gender in Buganda see Nannyonga-Tamusuza (2001).

or rolled or piled high for exchange, cloth helps social groups to reproduce themselves and to achieve autonomy or advantage in interactions with others” (1989:1). Victoria L. Rovine also mentions that, “ethnic groups, genders, and other social sectors use attire to define themselves as distinct from others” (2001:103). The above theories relating to cloth help us to articulate the way bark-cloth was used singularly or in tandem with other fabrics, as a means of maintaining the hierarchical structure at the Kabaka’s palace.

Historians argue that towards the end of the eighteenth-century, following the annexation of Buddu²⁸ to the kingdom of Buganda by Kabaka Junju (c.1764-1779) bark-cloth came to be regarded as the national fabric of the Baganda. Kabaka Ssemakookiro (c.1779-1794), it is claimed, revolutionized the bark-cloth industry when he made bark-cloth production a mandatory activity in Buganda. It was the duty of every Muganda male, as Roscoe asserts, to process enough bark-cloth for the needs of their family (1911: 403), and thenceforth, bark-cloth “came to be seen as a symbol of the kingdom itself” (Reid 2002: 70).

3.4.2 Use of Bark-cloth in Upholstery

As a material for interior decoration, bark-cloth was used to align the walls of the *masiro* (royal burial shrines). Plates 3.12(a) and 3.12(b) illustrate Muzibu-Azaala-Mpanga, popularly known as Kasubi Tombs, wherein are buried four Kings of Buganda namely: Muteesa I (1856-1884), Mwanga II (1884-1888, 1888- 1897), Daudi Chwa II (1897-1939) and Frederick Edward Muteesa II (1939-1969). According to the architectural design of the *masiro*, a large piece of bark-cloth is used to partition the

²⁸As earlier mentioned, for several centuries Buddu has been the hub of bark cloth production in Buganda.

house into two parts in order to seclude the royal tombs from public gaze. The royal tombs are situated behind the bark-cloth curtain, an area known as *ekibira* (“forest”), where the past Kings of Buganda are said to have “disappeared” (see plate 3.12(b)). According to Ganda mythology, the remains of Kintu, the founder of the Buganda kingdom were never found and buried. Hence, it was believed that Kintu simply disappeared into a forest near his palace at Magonga in the county of Busujju. Because Kintu was the founder of the kingship system in Buganda, his “disappearance” became a central part of the royal ideology. Hence, from then on, the royal graves were protected from public gaze to re-enact Kintu’s “disappearance”, by concealing them with a bark-cloth curtain that symbolizes the forest sanctuary. Similarly, the Baganda Kings are never said to have died, but instead, they are said to have disappeared (*okuzaama*) into the “forest” sanctuaries of their shrines. As Benjamin Ray states, “the “forest” sanctuary enabled Kintu’s successors to repeat his original transcendence of time, allowing them to communicate with the world of the living from generation to generation” (1991: 7).



Plate 3.12a Muzibu-Azaala-Mpanga, Photo by the author

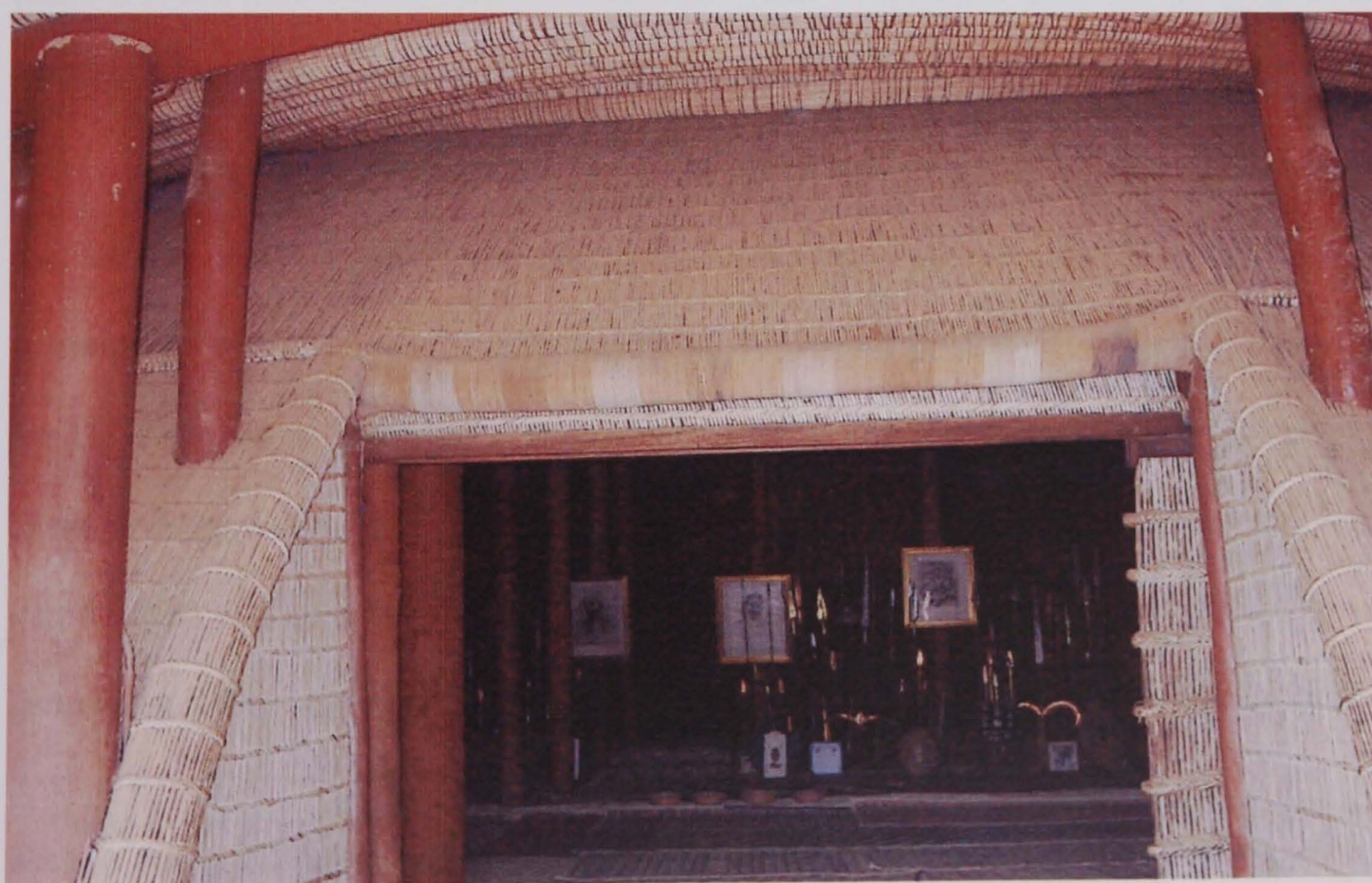


Plate 3.12b Close view of Muzibu-Azaala-Mpanga. Behind the royal artefacts is the bark-cloth curtain that separates the *ekibira* from the public domain, Photo by the author

In addition to dress, interior decoration and partitioning, bark-cloth was used for other purposes including bedding, storage of valuable and sacred items, and importantly as a shroud.

3.4.3 Dressing the Dead in Bark-cloth

Another important function of bark-cloth was for burial purposes. In the royal domain, the ritual of *okubikka akabugo* (covering the body of the deceased Kabaka with a piece of bark-cloth) serves as symbolic function of identifying the royal successor. Within the royal domain, only the heir to the throne is allowed to perform this act. Once the ritual of *okubikka akabugo* had been performed, the rest of the burial ceremonies would continue.²⁹ The Kings, chiefs and clan leaders were buried in a lot more bark-cloths as compared to the *bakopi*, the ordinary commoners. J. W. Chanell has observed that, “it is not uncommon, when an important chief or dignitary dies, for the body to be wrapped in as many as forty or fifty bark-cloths before the burial ceremony” (1962: 153).

Among the ordinary people, upon the death of a family member, the neighbours and other people associated with the family of the deceased, either by blood relation or marriage contributed bark-cloth for the burial ceremony, for it was a matter of necessity for the Baganda to bury their deceased in enough bark-cloth, in order to protect the skeleton from disintegration. Besides, because of the fear that the spirit of the deceased could return and torment the family members, a decent burial was always considered paramount. Hence up to thirty bark-cloths were used for the burial of an ordinary person

²⁹ Unlike in the royal domain where the heir to the throne is identified through the ritual of *okubikka akabugo*, among the Bakopi, the heir is appointed and presented at a separate function of *okwabya olumbe* (last funeral rites), which is normally arranged at a later date after the burial. I give a detailed account of the last funeral rites in chapter nine.

as explained by one elder, Sheikh Kavuma, the current Ssegirinya (official in charge of decoration of the royal regalia). Kavuma stressed that:

In the past, people in Buganda were buried in up to fifteen, twenty or thirty pieces of bark-cloth, so that the deceased would travel to the next world in a dignified manner. However, with the introduction of coffins³⁰ in Buganda, several people are nowadays buried almost naked because they are wrapped in only two cotton sheets before being encased in the coffin!!! (Interview, December, 2002).

(Edda, ng'omuntu bwafa, bamuziika mu mbugo nga kkumi na ttaano, amakumi abiri oba amakumi asatu n'agenda ng'aggumidde. Naye Ssaanduuke bwe zajja, abafu batandise n'okugenda obwerere; ate zino essuuka ebbiri mwe babazinga nebabasuula mu ssaanduuke!!!).

Kavuma's comment explicates that the total amount of bark-cloth used during the burial communicated the social stratification and social importance of the deceased.

3.4.4 Bark-cloth: a Connecting Thread between Generations?

In addition, bark-cloth was and is still significant during the ceremony of *okusumika / okussaako omusika* (succession rites) of the Baganda, both the royals and the ordinary people. According to the customs of the Baganda, the ritual of dressing the heir in bark-cloth symbolizes continuity of the ethnic lineage that runs through the clan and family structure in the case of the ordinary Baganda, and through the royal blood in the case of the Buganda Kingship. Until the advent of Christianity during the last quarter of the nineteenth-century, the royal accession ceremonies of the Baganda were apparently

³⁰ The concept of burying people in coffins was introduced in Buganda, during the late nineteenth-century by the CMS Christian missionary, A.M. Mackay, who was also a highly skilled craftsman. Mackay made the first wooden coffin for the burial of Nnamasole Muganzi-Lwaza, mother of Kabaka Muteesa I, who died in July 1882. For more details, see chapter four, section 4.6.2.

quite elaborate. Kaggwa (1905) gives an account of the historical coronation procedures, on which Roscoe draws for his 1911 publication, *The Baganda*. The pre-coronation rituals would take almost five months, but with the advent of Christianity, some of the customs were dropped, and thenceforth, this ritual was simplified. R. A. Snoxall (1937) gives a comparative perspective of the pre-Christian coronation rituals as documented by Kaggwa and Roscoe, and the twentieth-century coronation rituals, based on the coronation of Kabaka Daudi Chwa II (1897-1939). F. Lukyn Williams (1939) furnishes us with information relating to the accession ceremony of Kabaka Frederick Edward Muteesa II (1939-1969). I base my analysis of continuity and change in the cultural role of bark-cloth on these important documents, as well as the information gathered from the field, and on my personal observation of the coronation of Kabaka Muwenda Mutebi II, which took place at Nnaggalabi hill in Buddo, Busiro County, and was telecasted live on Uganda Television (UTV).³¹ I give details of the coronation of Mutebi II in chapter nine, but here, it suffices just to point out that during the royal accession ceremony, the Kabaka is draped in two pieces of bark-cloth, specially made by the chiefs Kakinda of the *kobe* clan, and Ssemwanga of the *ngonge* clan; and that, the *Nnaalinya* (Queen-sister) also referred to as *Lubuga*, with whom the Kabaka accesses the throne, is also dressed in bark-cloth, specially made by Lubyayi of the *mpologoma* clan.³² It can be noted that the use of

³¹ I observed the proceedings of the Coronation on television. Being a live coverage, I was able to see clearly the crucial moments in the investiture of the Kabaka, and to analyse the function of bark-cloth in this particular cultural context.

³² Kakinda, Ssemwanga and Lubyayi are titles given to the official royal bark-cloth makers from the three clans mentioned above.

bark-cloth authenticated the ceremony of *Okulya Obuganda* (“eating Buganda”)³³ and symbolized the centrality of the *Kabakaship* (Kingship) in the history of Buganda.

The succession rites for the common people are slightly similar in structure to the coronation ceremony. During a clan meeting, the heir is dressed by the clan leader, in one piece of bark-cloth knotted on the right shoulder. He is also assigned a female assistant (also referred to as *lubuga*), who is also dressed by the clan leader, in a piece of bark-cloth. Officiating of an heir marks the end of the mourning period. I give a detailed account of the succession ritual as performed among the Baganda royals and the *bakopi* at the closure of the twentieth-century and at the dawn of the twenty-first-century in chapter nine, sections 9.2.1 and 9.6 respectively.

3.4.5 Storage of Valuables

In addition, bark-cloth served for storage of highly valuable cultural objects of the Baganda. Most importantly, bark-cloth was used to preserve the umbilical cord of every newly born child in the family. According to customs of the Baganda, the legitimacy of membership to a family lineage and clan, whether royal or common, was proved, based on presentation of the child’s umbilical cord, by mothers, during the *okwalula abaana* (child-initiation ceremony). Roscoe (1911:62) gives a detailed description of the child-initiation ceremony. On that occasion, mothers took their children to a family gathering, and each carried with her the piece of umbilical cord, which she had preserved carefully from the time of her child’s birth. They presented the umbilical cords to their mother-in-law, who was charged with the responsibility of testing the cords. The *omukulu w’ekika*

³³ *Okulya Obuganda* means to become King.

(head of the clan) provided a bark-cloth for each mother to sit on during the ceremony. A waterproof basket was placed in the middle of the gathering and into this, was poured *omwenge omuganda* (locally brewed beer), milk and water. The mother in-law would then come forward and dip the umbilical cords, one at a time, into the basket. It followed that if the umbilical cord floated, then the child was acknowledged as a legitimate member of the clan. On the contrary, if the cord sank, then the child was disowned by the clan, on pretext that he or she was born in adultery. In conclusion of the child-initiation ceremony, the “legitimate” children were given clan-names and officially welcomed to their respective clans.

The principle of proving child-legitimacy also applied to the royal domain except that the royals did not have to wait for so long before the ceremony was performed. After the ceremony, the royal cords were taken to Kajaga royal palace³⁴, where they were preserved in bark-cloth and well decorated in beadwork. Because of their importance, the umbilical were almost personified and referred to as *omwana* (child). Hence, mothers used to keep the umbilical cords of their children secure, by wrapping them in bark-cloth strips, and then tie them around their waist. At no one occasion did the mothers fail to produce the umbilical cords of their children whenever called upon to do so. However, with the coming of Christianity, the purpose of women wearing bark-cloth strips around their waists was misunderstood and misinterpreted by the Western missionaries, as a “satanic” practice.

³⁴ Kajaga palace is the center for the royal aestheticians (*abagirinya abasiige*), of the *ngo* (leopard) clan, who were bestowed with the responsibility of designing and decorating royal artifacts.

3.4.6 Economic Significance of Bark-cloth

Lastly, bark-cloth was a major economic product for the Baganda. Bark-cloth was given as tribute to the monarch through the respective chiefs, who were the official representatives of the Kabaka. In every household, several trees were reserved for the production of bark-cloth for this purpose. Roscoe reports that “each married man paid twice a year, twenty-one pieces of bark cloth” (1911:252), which were collected by the county chiefs.³⁵ In addition, any person wishing to be exempt from the national obligation to participate in war paid a tax, in form of bark-cloth.³⁶ Furthermore, the establishment of political links³⁷ with the neighbouring regions, particularly, during the late eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth century, paved way for trade relations and effective commoditization of bark-cloth from Buganda. It is very likely that King Ssemakookiro ordered the Baganda to plant enough bark-cloth trees in their gardens after realizing the economic potential of bark-cloth. Richard Reid states that during this period, “bark-cloth was probably Buganda’s single most important regional export” (2002:136).

Bark-cloth was in great demand by the aristocratic class in Karagwe (in the current north-western region of Tanzania), Bunyoro, Nkore, Tooro, and as far as Rwanda, who obtained the fabric through the market centres that were operational in the region. Among others, were the markets of Bwerangye, in Karagwe; Mpara, in Bunyoro; and

³⁵ For example, earlier in this chapter, we made reference to Kimote, who was a chief in Buddu.

³⁶ In the middle of the seventeenth century, the Baganda launched a serious campaign to expand their territory by waging war against their neighbouring states. Thus, military service was made compulsory for every Muganda man.

³⁷ By the nineteenth-century, Buganda had exerted its political superiority over its neighbours.

Rubaga, in Buganda. However, Karagwe was the established multi-ethnic trade centre for the entire region. Grant, one of the nineteenth-century European explorers, gives an ethnographic description of the diversity of trade at Karagwe regional market, during his visit in 1862. Trade items ranged from copper and salt brought by the people of Mpororo (Kigezi, in south-western Uganda), tobacco from Nkore, painted matting goods from Rwanda, salt and iron from Unyamwezi, ivory from Bunyoro, and bark-cloth from Buganda (1872:255). The Baganda bartered bark-cloth for copper wire, which was highly valued for ornamental purposes.

Because of its economic and cultural value, bark-cloth became an important item in many social aspects of the Baganda. For example, it gained cultural significance as an important part of dowry paid by any Muganda man who wished to start a family. During the *okwanjula* (pre-marriage introduction ceremony), a man presented numerous gifts to the parents, uncles, aunties and brothers of the girl he wished to marry. Among other items, it was a requirement for the prospective husband to give a piece of well-made bark-cloth to the mother of the bride to-be, in appreciation for having taken good care of her. Another piece of bark-cloth was given to the bride's auntie³⁸ for having trained the bride in a culturally acceptable manner. The prospective husband was also obliged to take several pieces of bark-cloth for the bride as proof that he would be able to meet her needs. Thus the amount of bark-cloths given as dowry varied according to the social status of the husband to-be.

³⁸ Among the Baganda, paternal aunties are charged with the responsibility of preparing the bride, and advising her in all matters related to marriage obligations.

3.5 Conclusion

So far in this chapter, I have analyzed the socio-historical aspects relating to the kingdom of Buganda and their relationship to the discourse of bark-cloth. I have examined the origins, process of planting, harvesting and making bark-cloth. It has been mentioned that bark-cloth served as an important connecting thread between the past and present generations of the Baganda, as a marker of social hierarchies, and a measure of value. Thus, whenever presented, bark-cloth extended and bridged social relations among various peoples in Buganda. In general terms, bark-cloth provided a means for socio-cultural, political and economic empowerment of the Baganda. In the next chapter, I analyse how the interregional trade contacts with the Swahili-Arab merchants, during the nineteenth-century, contributed to the decline of the bark-cloth industry of the Baganda.

4 IMPACT OF EXTERNAL CONTACT ON THE BARK-CLOTH INDUSTRY OF THE BAGANDA (1840-1899)

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I examined the historical aspects relating to bark-cloth in Buganda. I analysed the origins of bark-cloth and its importance as a connecting thread between the past and present generations of the Baganda, as a marker of social hierarchies, and a measure of value. In this chapter, I turn to the impact of external contact on the production, role and meaning of bark-cloth in Buganda. By external contact, I refer to the non-African people that came to Buganda beginning in the mid-nineteenth century. These included the Swahili-Arab traders, the Western missionaries, and the colonial administrators. At the time of foreign intrusion, the manufacture of bark-cloth was still among the most important activities in Buganda. In this chapter, I examine the extent to which the external influence altered and negotiated the process and functions of bark-cloth of the Baganda.

For purposes of clarity, I have divided this chapter into two sections. The first section presents a background to the Swahili-Arab trade activities in East Africa, which culminated in the invasion of Buganda during the mid-nineteenth century. I discuss the influence of Swahili-Arab traditions on the transformation of the sartorial code of the Baganda. I argue that while their main activity was trade, the Swahili-Arab traders also introduced foreign traditions, which affected directly or indirectly the design functions and meaning of bark-cloth.

In the second section of this chapter, I examine the influence of European missionaries who introduced Christianity in Buganda during the 1870s. I interrogate their Western ideologies and reactions towards the indigenous artefacts and cultural practices in Buganda, and how these ideologies in turn, affected the notion of bark-cloth production and usage. The missionary ideologies did not differ significantly from those of the colonial administrators since the two factions had a similar objective of expanding European hegemony to Buganda and the rest of the interior of East Africa. As such, the two parties complemented each other in their activities, and both played an equally important role in the transformation of the bark-cloth industry. However, there is need to unravel this double-woven fabric in order to isolate the individual contribution of each of the two groups of Westerners in the transformation process of the functions and symbolic interpretation of bark-cloth. For this reason, I reserve the discussion on the economic impact of the colonial administrators for a separate chapter.

4.2 Coastal Swahili-Arab Trade Activities in Buganda

Before the Swahili-Arab traders arrived in Buganda, they had for centuries established their trading activities at the eastern coast of Africa along the shores of the Indian Ocean, and in the offshore islands. Due to the lack of archaeological evidence, it is not possible to state with certainty when the first Arabs arrived at the East African Coast. Nonetheless, historical records suggest that the first Arab merchant seafarers docked at the East African Coast around the first-century A.D. It is noted in the *Periplus of Erythraean Sea*, the earliest known document recounting the past situation on the East African Coast, written about 50 C.E (in Greek language by an anonymous author), that

the East African Coast was then controlled by the people of Mocha (Yemen) (as quoted in Brelvi 1964:190). Other writers suggest a later date, of about the seventh-century (Prins 1966: 40-41)¹ yet others mention the tenth-century (Oded 1974: 7-8) although little is known about these early Arab settlements until around the thirteenth-century when the Arab nobles began to establish their dominion in this region.² However, it is clear from the available evidence that while some Arabs settled at the East African coast as political refugees, others came to seek new markets for various trade items from the Arab world and Asia, which they hoped to barter for African natural resources. In the process, they established ports of call along the East African coast stretching from Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania, to Mozambique.³

In East Africa, as elsewhere, the Swahili-Arabs traded in textiles as their main commodity. Patricia L. Baker (1995:20) and Jenny Balfour-Paul (1997:14) argue that because textile manufacture was a well-established tradition in the Arab world, actually predating Islam, textiles constituted the main item of the Arab trade. Balfour-Paul mentions that the history of the Arab textile industry can be traced as far back as the mid-seventh to mid-eighth centuries when two significant laws were initiated that governed the mode of dress between various peoples, based on their social hierarchy and religious

¹ According to A. H. Prins, the first arrivals on the East African scene were two princes, co-regents of Oman, belonging to the Julanda dynasty, who fled their native country together with their followers in A.H 77 (A.D 696), as a result of the invasion of Arab troops under Hajjaj, the governor of Iraq on behalf of the Unmayyad Khalifs in Damuscus (1961:40-41).

² For example, around 1203 A.D, Sulaiman ibn Sulaiman ibn Muzafa al-Nabahany and his court from Oman came to Pate Island. There, by his marriage with a Swahili princess, the daughter of Ishaq, the indigenous ruler of Pate Island, he became the Sultan of Pate and founded the great Nabahan dynasty, which became politically influential (Brelvi 1964: 192).

³ By the fifteenth-century the coastal towns numbered about forty, the most important ones being Kilwa, which controlled all the routes from the Sofala gold mines in the south of present day Mozambique. Other important centers included Mafia, Malindi, Zanzibar, Mombasa, Lamu, Brava, and Marka.

background. First, the law stipulated the production of *tiraz*, distinctive royal embroidered fabric for clothing and furnishings to be used by Muslim civil and religious leaders (caliphs), and sovereign's advisers (courtiers). Secondly, it was stipulated that the non-Muslim population should wear distinguishing clothing (Balfour-Paul 1997:15). In consequence of these laws, a wide range of coloured and embroidered fabrics were manufactured that eventually became an important trade item of the Arabs trans-nationally. Historical documents reveal that some of the indigo-dyed fabrics from the Arab world reached the interior of East Africa as early as the late eighteenth-century.

In addition to textiles, cowries and beads from within the Arab countries, as well as porcelain from Asia were among other trade items that were popular at the East African coast (Oded 1974; Freeman-Grenville 1962). The Swahili-Arabs exchanged these trade items for ivory, which they exported to India, where it was highly required for the production of luxury dress accessories. Juhani Koponen mentions that ivory was fashionable for the production of "bangles and necklaces, which the Hindu and Muslim women of both upper and lower classes wore during their wedding ceremonies" (1988: 57). While the Indian market had provided the initial impetus for ivory trade at the East African coast, the rapid growth in demand for ivory in Europe and the United States during the nineteenth-century was also a contributing factor to the Swahili-Arab invasion of the interior. Mahmood Mamdani notes that, in Europe and the United States, ivory was in demand for the production of combs and piano keys (1999:27). Furthermore, some Swahili-Arabs also penetrated the interior of East Africa for purposes of slave trade. It was through such economic adventures that the coastal Swahili-Arabs eventually reached the kingdom of Buganda, thus becoming the first non-African population to establish

contact with the Baganda. The Swahili-Arab presence in Buganda, as shall be discussed in this chapter, had a significant impact on the institutional structure of Buganda, and in turn, prompted change in the design and usage of bark-cloth, beginning within the royal domain, which was also the centre of *Kiganda* traditions.

The first caravans to the interior of East Africa belonged to Sayyid ibn Said (1791- 1856)⁴, the Sultan of Omani, who transferred his headquarters from Muscat to the island of Zanzibar in 1840 (Mamdani 1999: 19). After establishing himself as the Sultan of Zanzibar, Sayyid ibn Said encouraged the Swahili-Arab traders to venture into the interior, and to that effect, he formalized the southern-northern route from the coastal town of Bagamoyo to Karagwe in the present day north-western region of Tanzania. A typical nineteenth-century Swahili-Arab caravan comprised of about 150 people sometimes “reaching between 500 and 1,000 persons” (Oded 1974:26). Led by a few Swahili-Arabs, caravans comprising of indigenous porters (referred to by the Baganda as *abalungana*⁵) of Unyamwezi origin in Central Tanzania, loaded with woven-cloth and beads, would leave from Bagamoyo along the east African coast, and traverse a 600 miles journey towards Tabora in Unyanyembe, south of Lake Victoria. In fact, Israel Katoke argues that, “it was through these pioneers of the long-distance trade that the Arabs came to know about the wealth of Karagwe and her sister states of Buganda, Bunyoro, and Ankole” (1969:126).

⁴ Some Western scholars refer to the Sultan as Sayyid bin Said but I was made to understand that in the Arab nomenclature, the stem *ibn* means “son of”. Hence the correct name for the Sultan is Sayyid ibn Said, not Sayyid bin Hussain. This correction also applies to other Swahili-Arab names referred to in this research. I acknowledge John Picton for his keen observation, and Hassan Jamalanik, a fellow PhD student at Middlesex but originating in Iran, for his clarification.

⁵ The term *abalungana* was corrupted from *wangwana*, a term used by the Swahili-Arabs to refer to the indigenous peoples of central and southern Tanzania, who were also the first to engage in long-distance trade with the coastal people.

From Tabora, the caravans followed the northern route to Karagwe, which was an important regional trade centre by the late eighteenth and early to mid-nineteenth century. Karagwe was an established multi-ethnic trade centre for the entire region. The explorer R. J. Grant, who reached Karagwe in 1862 reports that ethnic groups beyond Mpororo, to the west of Ankole (in the present-day south-western and western Uganda respectively), came to Karagwe with copper and salt to exchange for brass wire. Grant observed the pattern of trade during his sojourn in Karagwe. He noted that the Ankole traders brought their celebrated tobacco while the people from Rwanda traded their painted matting goods [probably] for salt and iron wire. In addition, the Banyamwezi of central and southern Tanzania exchanged salt for ivory brought by the Banyoro, and the Baganda bartered their excellent bark-cloth and other articles (as quoted in Oded, 1974:30). Moreover, it was from Karagwe that Kabaka Ssemakookiro (ca.1779-1794) got access for the first time, to woven cloth during the late eighteenth century.

While in Karagwe, the Swahili-Arab traders established their settlement at a place known as Kafuro, near the south-western shores of Lake Victoria. At Kafuro, they stored various trade articles including beads, cloth, brass wires, cowries and other trade items, which they exchanged with the local people for ivory (Oded 1974:31; Speke 1865:259, 1864:197-240). From their trading post in Kafuro, the coastal caravans continued further north towards the Kitengure (Kagera) River. After crossing the Kagera River by canoe, they entered Buddu, which is the southernmost county of the kingdom of Buganda, and the biggest producer of bark-cloth. The distance from Bagamoyo to Buganda, which took several months to traverse, was estimated to be about 1250 miles.⁶ It was a common

⁶ While briefing Speke in 1858 about the journey from Tabora to Buganda, Snay ibn Amir, one of the pioneer Swahili-Arab traders in Buganda, approximated the distance from Tabora to the Buganda royal

practice for the caravans to be stopped upon their entry in Buddu, by *pokino*, the County chief, who then informed the Kabaka about their presence. During my field interviews, I was told that all County chiefs in Buganda were obliged to report promptly to the Kabaka of the presence of any foreigners and only after receiving permission of the Kabaka were the foreigners allowed to continue to the royal capital. Given the problems of transport at that time, when the only means of travel was by foot, I am compelled to argue that the Swahili-Arabs usually spent at least a week or two in Buddu awaiting communication to be relayed to and from the royal capital.⁷ It is also possible that during their sojourn in Buddu, the Swahili-Arab traders took the opportunity to interact with the indigenous population, in order to get familiar with some aspects of the Kiganda traditions, including bark-cloth production. Conversely, during their temporary stay in Buddu, the Swahili-Arabs may have introduced their culture and skills to the Bannabuddu (residents of Buddu), bark-cloth painting being one of the outcomes of this cultural-contact. From Buddu County the caravans then crossed River Katonga and continued north-eastwards through Butambala and Mawokota Counties, until they finally reached Nnabulagala, the royal capital of Kabaka Suuna II (1832-1856).

capital. He mentioned that from Tabora to Kitangule (Kagera) was a distance of thirty-five marches (1 march = 10 miles); and that the *kibuga* (royal capital) was twenty-nine additional marches to the north. (Speke 1865:255) and the journey from Bagamoyo to Tabora had been estimated to be almost 600 miles (Oded 1974:25).

⁷ The journey from the southernmost part of Buddu to the royal capital is about 120 miles.

4.2.1 The First Swahili-Arabs at the Palace of Kabaka Suuna II

It is not possible to state with any certainty the exact date of arrival, the names, and socio-ethnic background of the pioneer coastal traders to reach the royal capital, as the subject is still open to on-going debate among scholars of Buganda history. Some historians have argued that the first coastal traders to reach Buganda arrived at Kabaka Suuna II's palace in the 1840s (Apter 1967:6; Ingham 1962:173). Ham Mukasa, a Muganda historian argues that, "Isa ibn Husein, originally from Baluchistan, was the first Arab to arrive at Suna's [*sic*] palace" (1938:14). The problem in accepting Mukasa's assertion is that he does not mention the date of Isa ibn Husein's arrival in Buganda. In addition, whereas the name Isa ibn Hussein is undoubtedly Arabic, it does not constitute sufficient evidence that the subject referred to was indeed of Arab origin since both the "pure" Arabs and the Swahilis had similar names and communicated in Arabic by the time they came to Buganda. Mukasa's mere mention of name does not lend enough support to his claim that Isa ibn Hussein was the first to arrive in Buganda. Yet J. Miti, another indigenous historian, mentions that "the first Arab to come to Buganda was called Saim, who arrived at the royal capital of King Suuna II about the year 1848" (n.d.: 123).

On the other hand, Apolo Kaggwa, an earlier Muganda historian, noted the arrival of three Arabs namely: Kyera, Lusuku and Zigeye and two Swahilis: Muina and Lukabya, whom Kayiira had met at the royal capital on his way from an expedition in Busoga (1901:91). Whereas Kaggwa identifies the two categories of the pioneer coastal traders, the names he provides are neither of Swahili nor Arab origin. And yet, he does not indicate whether the two social groups arrived at different times, or simultaneously.

Nonetheless, it is likely that Kaggwa may have *Gandanised*⁸ the names of the pioneer arrivals in Buganda, since his work was originally written in Luganda. Further, Kaggwa, like Mukasa, does not indicate the period he is making reference to in this discussion. Nonetheless, on the evidence of his mention of Kayiira, we can get a clue about the period Kaggwa is referring to. Historical records indicate that Kayiira was Buganda's *Katikkiro* (Prime minister) during the reign of Kabaka Suuna II (1832-1856). Ssemakula Kiwanuka has noted that Kayiira assumed the premiership in the middle of Kabaka Suuna II's reign (1971: 124), which, by calculation, was, about 1844. This date corresponds with Emin Pasha's statement that "Sheik Ahmed... or as he was called by Burton, Hammed bin Ibrahim...first came... to Suna [*sic*] (meaning Suuna's palace) in 1260" (as quoted in Gray 1961a: 10).⁹ According to the *Hijra* (Arab calendar), the year 1260 is equivalent to 1844 A.D in the Roman calendar. If the Swahili-Arabs reached Karagwe around the late 1830's and early 1840s as suggested by Katoke (1969:126-129), and given the fact that almost all sources confirm that the Swahili-Arabs came to Buganda via the southern-northern route, then it is not likely that they could have arrived at Kabaka Suuna II's palace at any earlier date. I therefore, concur with the above scholars that the first coastal traders reached the Buganda royal capital around the mid-nineteenth century. Like Kaggwa, Mukasa does not mention the date of Isa ibn Husein's arrival in Buganda. Nonetheless, the arrival of the Swahili-Arab traders at the royal court

⁸ The Baganda have a tendency to localize and assimilate names and words of foreign origin into their language. For example, they assimilated into their vocabulary the Swahili words *kikombe* for cups, and *sahani* for dishes, which they refer to as *ekikopo* (pl. *bikopo*) and *esowani* or *esiyani* (Buddu dialect) respectively. They also transformed names of missionaries into Luganda equivalents namely; Makayi for Mackay, Pirikintoni for Pilkington, Basikaviri for Baskerville, Mapeera for Père Lourdel, and many others. It is highly probable that the names Kyera, Lusuku and others quoted by Kaggwa were *indigenized* versions of Arab or Swahili names. I acknowledge Arye Oded (1974) for making a similar observation.

⁹ See the 'Diaries of Emin Pasha Extract I' entrance dated 11/8/1876.

paved the way for significant changes in the organization of the kingdom. By establishing contact with Kabaka Suuna II, the Swahili-Arabs made formal commercial relations between the kingdom of Buganda and the Sultanate of Zanzibar, which not only resulted into formal trade between the two countries but also culminated in exchange of ideas and skills.

In addition, this Swahili-Arab contact in Buganda also engendered cross-cultural transfer of values and traditions between the two peoples, which at a later stage, were to have a significant impact on the production and functions of bark-cloth. Of significant importance to this study was the introduction of Islam, which happened simultaneously with the introduction of trade in Buganda. As noted at the beginning of this chapter, whereas trade remained their main interest, which was “in practice [characterized by] exchange of presents between the monarch and [the] merchants” (Oded 1974:46); the coastal Swahili-Arab traders also initiated Kabaka Suuna II into the Islamic faith. In his publication, *Ekitabo kye Bika bya Buganda*, Kaggwa narrates how Ahmad ibn Ibrahim convinced Suuna to convert to Islam. Upset by the King’s tendency of killing his subjects for trivial offences, Ahmad ibn Ibrahim rebuked Suuna II and cautioned him that the people he was slaughtering were God’s creation. However, the King rejected the claim arguing that indigenous gods, *balubaale*, gave him his Kingdom *and the people therein* [italics, emphasis added]. The argument later opened an avenue for further discussions on the subject of religion, and consequently Kabaka Suuna II requested Ahmad ibn Ibrahim to teach him more about the Islamic faith (Kaggwa 1927: 116).

Another significant outcome of the Swahili-Arab contact with Buganda was the introduction of textiles (woven-cloth), and the Arab style of dress. Initially presented as

diplomatic gifts from the Sultan of Zanzibar to the Kabaka of Buganda, textiles soon became the main item of trade between the two states. The introduction of imported textiles in Buganda, as shall be explained shortly, had a significant impact on the transformation of the bark-cloth industry of the Baganda. In chapter three, it was mentioned that bark-cloth was the oldest single economic activity that brought wealth into the kingdom through the regional markets, where it was a popular item of trade. Although it is not clear to what extent the coastal traders participated in the bark-cloth trade before they arrived in Buganda, there is evidence suggesting that the Swahili-Arab traders exchanged some of their trade items for bark-cloth. For example, Katoke claims that, “the Swahili and Arab traders brought [to Karagwe] copper coils, salt, [woven] cloth, china-ware, pots, etc. in exchange for ivory, bark-cloth, spears, bows and arrows as well as coffee” (1969:144). Yet, as mentioned above, bark-cloth of the Baganda was a popular item of trade in Karagwe. While no plausible conclusion can be reached based on this limited information, what is clear is that the Swahili-Arab traders had knowledge about the lucrative bark-cloth industry of the Baganda prior to their arrival in Buganda. Therefore, it is easier to conclude that out of their business acumen, the Swahili-Arab traders introduced woven textiles in order to extend their textile market into the East African interior. In several cases, the textiles were used as currency for the purchase of ivory and slaves from the interior. Hence, the crucial question to be addressed at this stage is: of what impact was the Swahili-Arab trade in Buganda, and how did it affect the bark-cloth industry of the Baganda?

4.2.2 Swahili-Arab Traders in Buganda and their Impact on Bark-cloth

Historians argue that the first Swahili-Arab merchants introduced in Buganda various exotic commodities including beads, cowries, mirrors, and musical instruments (Oded 1974: 46; Kagawa 1927:91). Most importantly, these merchants introduced the concept of wearing woven-cloths. As noted in the previous chapter, bark-cloth constituted the main item of dress in Buganda, worn by almost everyone in Buganda. However, as a result of the direct external contact with the Swahili-Arabs, the Baganda gained access to exotic textiles, which were initially presented to Kabaka Suuna II, as presents from the Sultan of Zanzibar. According to Patricia Baker, exchange of luxurious items between rulers was an Arab court tradition. She argues that luxurious items particularly textiles, were a symbol of authority, prosperity and prestige of the prevailing regimes. For that reason, textiles were frequently sent as diplomatic gifts (*khila*) between rulers (1995:15). As such, on arrival at the royal palace, the initial party of the coastal Swahili-Arab traders presented to Kabaka Suuna II (c.1832-1856), “ten [pieces] of cotton cloth” (Oded 1974:46) of various sizes, colours, designs and qualities (Miti n.d: 125). The fact that weaving technology was not known in Buganda at that time; bark-cloth being by far the most highly developed fabric technology, the woven-textiles appealed tremendously to the aesthetic sensibilities of the Kabaka. As a result, Kabaka Suuna II was prompted to open the gates of his kingdom to coastal trade activities, and to extend warm hospitality to the Swahili-Arab traders that came to Buganda.

Some historians have argued that Kabaka Suuna II’s involvement, and good attitude towards the foreigners was politically motivated, because it was in total contrast to his character as a cruel ruler of his subjects (Stanley 1878:363). Nakanyike-Musisi, a

historian on Buganda clarifies that by the nineteenth-century, there was political tension, which had developed between the monarchy and the *bataka* (heads of the Baganda clans). According to her report, the *bataka* had expressed discontentment about the over-all supremacy of the monarchy, and the resultant suppression of the indigenous system of clan leadership (1991:115). As she argues, Kabaka Suuna II was therefore in need of a new political and religious order, which would enable him to have complete control over the kingdom (ibid). Therefore, associating with the foreigners who had superior technology, as expressed through their textiles, guns and other trade items, was of immediate priority for Kabaka Suuna II as a potential means of solving his internal problems. Hence, in order to encourage the Swahili-Arab merchants to stay in Buganda, Kabaka Suuna II gave them accommodation and presents of bullocks, grain, and other foods (Oded 1974:44). In addition, Kabaka Suuna II conferred high positions to some of the first Swahili-Arab arrivals. It has been claimed that Kabaka Suuna II gave Isa ibn Husein a chieftainship in the village of Kituntu in Buddu County (ibid: 37, 44; Speke 1865: 259). As a result of the King's warm hospitality, more Swahili-Arabs came to trade in Buganda. They soon began to expand their cultural influence, which was to result in the transformation of several facets of the local traditions of the Baganda.

At the royal palace, imported textiles soon came to be seen as a new symbol of royalty. Henceforth, possession of imported textiles became a royal privilege of the Kabaka; later extended to the *Nnamasole* (Queen-mother), and the *Lubuga* (Queen-sister) who were the other two most important figures in the kingdom¹⁰. Oral tradition alludes

¹⁰ In the royal family structure, *Nnamasole* was a woman with considerable administrative power and great honour, by virtue of having given birth to the King. She had great influence in matters of state and had her own palace. She held her court and had estates in each of the counties of Buganda. The same was true with

that Kabaka Suuna II himself took custodial charge over his textile collection despite the presence of a separate officer *Kuluggi*, who was responsible for the royal treasury. Further, it has been mentioned that Kabaka Suuna II stored his textile collection for a long time before he started wearing them (Kaggwa 1927: 91; Kiwanuka 1970: 167; Oded 1974:46). Prior to their journey to Buganda, explorers John Hannington Speke and R. J. Burton spent some time in Kaze (Karagwe) where they met in 1857 Sheikh Snay ibn Amir, a Swahili-Arab merchant who traded in Buganda during Kabaka Suuna II's reign. Snay ibn Amir reported that "[Suuna II's only cushion was mbuga [*sic*] [bark-cloth] and his dress was of the same stuff" (Burton 1961:194), which indicates that Kabaka Suuna II must have continued to wear bark-cloth despite his earlier fascination with the concept of woven textiles. J. Miti reports that, "during Suna's [*sic*] time there was a general belief among the Baganda that [woven] cloth had a bad smell" (as cited in Oded, 1974:46). Miti's observation is critical to this study in two respects.

First, I find Miti's statement meaningful because it enables us to speculate on the spectrum of fabrics that were first introduced in Buganda during the mid-nineteenth-century. Based on my expert knowledge in the field of textiles, it is characteristic of fabrics woven out of animal fibres, such as silk and wool to emit some kind of unpleasant odour due to the protein composition therein. Whereas different scholars have referred to cotton fabrics in their discussion relating to Swahili-Arab contact in Buganda (Kiwanuka 1971; Oded 1974; Musisi 1991), it is possible that by the mid-nineteenth-century, the Baganda royals had access to other types of fabrics. Secondly, his statement enables us to speculate on the fabric dyeing processes that were common at the time. Vat-dyed fabrics

Lubuga, the King's half sister with whom he succeeds to the throne (Roscoe 1911: 84, 236-237; Ham Mukasa 1946:139).

in particular, tend to assume a distinctive smell that the Baganda could have found unappealing. However, the other possible cause of the smell could have been the difficult conditions under which merchant goods were stored and, or transported to the interior. While this odorous attribute may initially have caused some degree of negativity by the Baganda towards imported textiles, it was certainly not the major reason why Kabaka Suuna II continued to use bark-cloth for sartorial purposes. Kabaka Suuna II could not afford to break with the tradition of wearing bark-cloth because of its associated rituals with kingship in Buganda.¹¹

However, considering the fact that Kabaka Suuna II took custodial duties over his exotic textiles, and controlled monopolistically the textile trade is well enough evidence to prove that he regarded exotic fabrics very highly. Moreover, Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood report that, “outside the industrial system...goods are desired and selected not merely for their particular use-value but as markers within larger communication systems” (1979:128). Likewise, with specific reference to Buganda, Reid asserts that “the Baganda rulers perceived ownership of cloth as a way of accentuating wealth, power, and privilege in much the same way that certain skins, notably that of the leopard, were emblems of royal blood” (2002: 151). It is, therefore, fair to argue that Kabaka Suuna II’s desire to maintain tradition, and at the same time adapt himself to modern developments might have prompted him to encourage the art of bark-cloth decoration at his palace, even though embellishing of bark-cloth with design and colour might not have been part of the royal court traditions of the Baganda, as I explain shortly.

¹¹ Refer to the socio-cultural functions of bark-cloth in chapter three.

4.2.3 Swahili-Arab Impact on the Process of Bark-cloth Decoration

The history of patterned bark-cloth in Buganda during the mid-nineteenth century is not well known. Likewise, full assessment of the antiquity and historicity of the art of patterned bark-cloth in Buganda yet remains to be done. Because of lack of any surviving evidence, the only available examples of patterned bark-cloth from Buganda date to the last decade of the nineteenth-century. These can be found in the ethnographic collection of the British Museum in London (plate 4.1), and the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford (plate 4.2). The artefacts are characterized by regular stripes, hatches, crosshatches, zigzags, crescents and concentric circles, painted and stencilled in black as shown in plates 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 below. A differently patterned bark-cloth was also found at the royal shrine of Kabaka Suuna II at Wamala (originally known as Wamunyeenye) in Busiro County. However, because of the palace restrictions, I was not able to make a photographic record for inclusion in this study.



Plate 4.1 Patterned Bark-cloth from Buganda. 185cm x 197.5cm. Collection of the British Museum, London
Photo by the author



Plate 4.2 Patterned Bark-cloth from Buganda. 210cm x 320cm. Collection of the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford
Photo by the author



Plate 4.3 Patterned bark-cloth from Buganda. 251cm x 202cm. Collection of the British Museum, London
Photo by the author

Based on the field information gathered in 2002, the process of bark-cloth decoration was carried out using a special colouring agent prepared by mixing pigment extracted from the leaves of a plant locally known as *muzuukizi* (*justicia betonica*), which generates dark purple dye, with the slip¹² from the riverbed. The slip served two purposes namely to transfer the dye onto the bark-cloth and also acted as a mordant¹³ since it contains iron. The iron in the slip also enables the purple dye to turn black. The patterns were applied by way of direct painting but in several cases, stencilling was used depending on the complexity of the design. Bedesta Musoke, a retired bark-cloth maker

¹² Slip is a creamy mixture of clay, water and pigment, normally used for decorating earthenware.

¹³ A mordant is a chemical substance used in the fabric-dyeing process to fix dyes in the textile fibers.

who was once actively involved in bark-cloth trade during the 1920 and 1930s. explained to me that a stencil, cut out of a lightly smoked fresh banana leaf (*olulagala oluwotose ku muliro*) or a banana-fibre (*ekyaayi*), was used to transfer the pattern onto the bark-cloth. In this case, the artist would use his fingers or a banana-leaf stalk to apply the slip. After completion of the patterning process, the bark-cloth was spread out in the sun to dry and the clay was later scraped off, leaving a fine design (interview, May, 2002).

There is very limited documented information relating to the social history, and process of patterned bark-cloth in Buganda. The earliest historical account of patterned bark-cloth in Buganda has been cited in the publications by European explorers, missionaries, ethnographers and colonial administrators who visited Buganda during the last quarter of the nineteenth-century. For example, Emin Pasha, a former governor of the Equatorial Province (East Africa), visited Buganda in 1876 and in his diaries, he reports of a variety of bark-cloth worn by the Baganda. Pasha states:

Some are dark grey, and generally worn by Wichezi [*sic*] sorceresses; others dark red, and worn as great luxury by wives of well-to-do people; others again have very neat regular stripes and spots of black on their leather-yellow ground, and resemble coarse printed calico¹⁴ in pattern and general appearance. This last kind was formerly worn by royal personage (as quoted in Schweinfurth et al 1888:119).

Similarly, Paul Kollman, a senior lieutenant of the imperial troops for Germany East Africa also reported that, “specially-fine pieces [of bark-cloth], having numerous symmetrical figures delineated on them with black earth, used to be reserved for the King and the princesses” (1899: 31-33). Later in the mid-twentieth-century, Margaret Trowell

¹⁴ The term “calico” in this case refers to printed cotton fabric, originally from Calicut, in the Southwestern region of India.

mentioned that, “the patterned bark-cloth that was worn only by the royal wives¹⁵ and princesses was embellished in bold geometrical patterns painted or stamped in black dye” (1953: 182). Because of their social position, the women aristocrats, who included *abambejja* (princesses) and *bakembuga* (royal wives and young girls presented to the Kabaka, and waiting to become royal wives) shared the royal privilege of wearing patterned bark-cloth while other members continued to be clad in plain bark-cloth.

Unfortunately, the above sources do not state the period when patterned bark-cloth was in use at the royal palace, but what is clear is that patterned bark-cloth must have flourished at a time when imported-textiles were still a very rare commodity in Buganda, a period which by implication, coincides with the reign of Kabaka Suuna II. Four key questions thus ought to be addressed at this stage namely: 1) Why patterned bark-cloth? 2) Who were the key players in the production of patterned bark-cloth? 3) Under what circumstances was patterned bark-cloth produced? 4) What explains the lack of continuity in the practice of bark-cloth decoration for royal purposes?

4.2.4 Aesthetics of Patterned Bark-cloth in Buganda?

The concept of patterned bark-cloth in Buganda can be understood after analyzing the terminologies used in connection with the aesthetics of the Baganda. The term *embugo entone* [sing. *olubugo olutone*], which is a collective term for patterned bark-cloth, stems from the Luganda verb *okutona* meaning to tint; paint or apply colour; but

¹⁵ Royal wives came from four major social strata namely; those presented to the Kabaka by the different clans of Buganda, slave women captured during the territorial battles, those from the tribute-giving regions (Bunyoro, Busoga, Ankole, and Karagwe), and daughters of the Baganda chiefs given to the Kabaka gratuitously while seeking royal favours or appeasing the Kabaka for some wrong doing (Speke 1864: 282; Musisi 1991:71; Reid 2002:113-130).

okutona is also used in connection with offering a present (Snoxall 1967:314; Lugira 1970:33). Lugira asserts that according to the *Kiganda* aesthetic drive:

Something to be donated had somehow to be ornamented, which is *kutona* in the widest sense. That is the reason why a present is called *Kitone* (sing.) *Bitone* (plur.). Care was taken to embellish a thing in a way appropriate to the status of the one to whom it was to be presented. Things dedicated to the Kabaka were given the finest finish possible... (ibid).

Although Lugira makes reference to patterned bark-cloth, in his explanation of the concept of *kutona*, he does not interrogate the social history of patterned bark-cloth in Buganda. My field research on the historicity of patterned bark-cloth within and outside the Buganda royal domain revealed that the concept of *okutona* as in painting or decoration did not originally apply to bark-cloth, although it is true that the Baganda commoners donated bark-cloth as a tribute to the royal palace.

During a focus group discussion with representative bark-cloth-makers in Buddu County, I was informed that the aesthetic quality of bark-cloth is determined by the colour and feel of the fabric as opposed to its surface decoration. The best bark-cloth, from the perspective of the bark-cloth makers themselves, should be of a medium terracotta-brown, and having a soft feel almost comparable to woven textiles. This type of bark-cloth, later named *kimote*¹⁶ after a late-nineteenth century local chief in Buddu, was the most suitable for presentation to the royal palace at Mengo. In addition, special attention was required during the production process to ensure that the bark-cloth meant for royal usage was devoid of any ruptures or stitches. It is common for the bark-cloth to get damaged during the beating process, especially if the tree trunk was not well-

¹⁶ See chapter three, methods of bark-cloth production

maintained; hence the *bakomazi* stitch together the ruptured parts by way of looping, using banana fibres or some other natural fibres like dyed raffia, or sisal. Such a fabric is considered of inferior quality and is therefore not worthy presenting as *amakula* (royal gift). In fact, one informant explained to me: “Because it was such a special honour to take bark-cloth to the royal palace at Mengo, a bark-cloth maker selected the best fabric, of the appropriate colour, and devoid of patches” (“okutwaala olubugo e Mengo kyaali kya kitiibwa nnyo... era omukomazi yaloonderanga ddala olubugo olulungi ennyo, olumyuukidde ddala obulungi, era olutaliimu bibaapi; olutali lutungirire”).¹⁷ Two key questions thus follow: if the local aesthetics of the bark-cloth producers do not place emphasis on surface decoration, then how did patterned bark-cloth find its way to the royal palace? Who were the key players in the decoration of bark-cloth, if it was not the *bakomazi*?

4.2.5 Key Players in the Decoration of Bark-cloth

There is evidence to suggest that the Swahili-Arab traders, whom the Baganda referred to as *abalungaana*, or at least their contact with the Baganda people, was a contributing factor to the development of the art of bark-cloth decoration in Buganda during the mid-nineteenth-century. Because of their established trade along the Indian Ocean, the Swahili-Arab traders had long been exposed to patterned fabrics from various regions of the world including among others India, China, the United States, Britain, and the Netherlands, and had considerable knowledge in the techniques of fabric design and decoration. Thus when they penetrated the East African interior, they exposed the

¹⁷ Focus group discussion with bark-cloth makers of Kabira 23/06/2002

Baganda to a wide spectrum of decorated fabrics, whose motifs the Baganda may have appropriated on bark-cloth using local dyes and other materials. Moreover, it has been acknowledged by many scholars on Buganda history that the Baganda display excellent skills when it comes to adapting themselves to foreign traditions. For example, John Roscoe, the ethnographer-cum-missionary of the early twentieth-century observed:

One of the remarkable characteristics of the Muganda is his power of imitation, especially in all kinds of mechanism. Give a man time to examine an object, and he will apprehend the mode of its construction, and will go and produce one so much like it that it is often well-nigh impossible to tell which is the original...This trait of imitation is noticeable even in small children, who may be seen making toy guns... bicycles [etc]...This power of imitation is the more striking because the Baganda are not remarkable for originality; once, however, an idea has been presented to them, they are quick to seize it, and with but few tools and the common materials around them to turn out the most cunningly devised article (1911:365)

Despite the exaggerated tone, Roscoe's observation was in general, not inaccurate. Apart from dress, further examples of the visual-cultural flexibility of the Baganda can be found in their architecture and interior decoration. Mat weaving was another peculiar technology, which the Baganda appropriated from the Swahili-Arab traditions. From the mid-nineteenth century, mats became a popular item for embellishing the floors of royal courts, and as a fabric to sit on. Subsequently, mat weaving became a distinctive design tradition, which the Baganda women engaged into, in order to display their ingenuity, and to the present date, mat weaving remains an important social and cultural activity of many women in Buganda.

However, focusing attention back to our present discussion on bark-cloth, I argue that the availability of high quality bark-cloth in Buddu, coupled with the artistic and enterprising mind of both the Swahili-Arab-traders and the Baganda, engendered

experimentation into the possibilities of bark-cloth decoration. Earlier in this chapter, it was mentioned that the Swahili-Arab traders stayed in Buddu for a relatively long period of time awaiting permission to continue to the royal capital. Their sojourn in Buddu certainly could have given them the opportunity to extend contact with the bannabuddu to learn about the social etiquette, and perhaps to share various cultural practices including the art of fabric decoration. Historical sources confirm that by the mid-nineteenth century, the Swahili-Arabs had developed a local style of fabric design at the East African coast. Predominantly was the art of *kanga* design and decoration, inspired from the Portuguese handkerchiefs, which were once a popular item of trade at the coast of East Africa (Julia Hilger 1995:44-45). *Kangas* are characterized by a set of repeated motifs and a border design applied on a rectangular fabric, of about 1.5 meters in length by 1 metre in width, usually with a proverb depicting the Swahili-Arab culture. These became a common article of trade in Buganda, especially during the second quarter of the twentieth-century.

However, whereas the historical documents referred to above indicate that patterned bark-cloth was associated with royalty, there is little evidence to prove that bark-cloth decoration was indeed a royal court tradition before the coming of the Swahili-Arab traders. Many informants within and outside the royal domain argued that bark-cloth decoration was a foreign tradition that had nothing to do with royalty in Buganda. During the course of my field research in 2002, I presented photographs of the patterned bark-cloth to various people in a bid to find more information about the historicity and methods of patterned bark-cloth in Buganda. Many of my informants could not provide substantial information on the origins and antiquity of this tradition of patterned bark-

cloth although they all pointed out that bark-cloth decoration was a foreign tradition learned and practiced by only a few members of the Baganda society. For example, Sheikh Kavuma, the current *Ssegirinya* (chief decorator of royal insignia), asserted that patterned bark-cloth was not a tradition typical to the Baganda. According to his argument “since time immemorial decoration of royal insignia has been our duty; [duty of the *bagirinya* members of the *ngo* clan] but bark-cloth decoration has certainly not been part of our royal duties, and I doubt that it has been in the past, unless it was introduced to the palace by the Swahili-Arabs” (“omulimu gw’okuwunda eby’obwakabaka okuva edda n’edda gwaffe Abagirinya naye eky’okusiiga embugo sikya buwangwa bwaffe era siraba ngeri ki embugo ezo gyezaatuuka ewa Kabaka okujjako nga Abalungana beebaazitwalayo”) (interview, December 2002).

Another informant, who requested anonymity asserted that in addition to virginity, which was the main prerequisite when selecting a royal wife, the Baganda also ensured that the girls they presented to the Kabaka had no scars whatsoever because these were regarded as a form of deformity. For that reason, the Baganda also refrained from any form of decorative practices that gave an impression of deformity such as scarification and tattooing. They applied body marks only in exceptional cases, to ward off negative energies. Specifically, some people painted their bodies as acts of bravery while going for war expeditions, or in the case of women, when having a complicated pregnancy. He contended: “It is not in the Buganda tradition to embellish one’s body with pattern or by scarification except in a few cases where some Baganda applied ash while going on a war expedition, and also those women who had complications during pregnancy” (“Ssi mpisa ya Buganda okwetonatona oba okusala emisale. Okujjako

Abaganda beesiigaanga evvu be ppo nga bagenda okutabaala, mpozzi n' abakyala abayisibwanga obubi nga balina ettu") (anonymous interview, November. 2002).

However, as I continued with my investigations in the royal domain, I was able to find one piece of patterned bark-cloth at the royal tombs of Kabaka Suuna II (plates 4.4 and 4.5), located at Wamala village in Busiro County. The bark-cloth was characterized by simplistic floral motifs, arranged in regular repeated pattern on a dotted background. On close inspection, it was clear that this artefact was designed and printed in a more controlled manner, almost similar to the *kanga* design, referred to earlier. I was told that the patterned bark-cloth is part of the royal insignia of the *Nnaalinya* (queen sister and guardian of the royal tombs) of Kabaka Suuna II. According to Nandyose Mukondo, one of the caretakers at Wamala tombs, the patterned bark-cloth had been given as a present to the *Nnaalinya*, but due to problems of oral history, it was not possible to establish the source of the artefact or the date of acquisition. I was not able to get more information on the social history of the artefact because the caretaker of the *abalongo* royal artefacts was not very keen to discuss the subject. Because she was sceptical about the intentions of my research, and since she was wary about the possibility of subjecting the royal artefact to public gaze, I was not permitted to take photographs of the artefact. I made several attempts to have an interview with the current successor of the *Nnaalinya* of Kabaka Suuna II, but again I was not given an audience. Nevertheless, the artefact was important evidence to support the hypothesis that usage of patterned bark-cloth for royal purposes was a mid-nineteenth century tradition associated with the reign of Kabaka Suuna II, and by implication, with the coming of the Swahili-Arab traders.



Plate 4.4 Entrance to the Royal Tombs of Kabaka Suuna II at Wamala in Busiro County
Photo by the author



Plate 4.5 Batanda -Beezaala, the Mausoleum of Kabaka Suuna II
Photo by the author

However, the theory that patterned bark-cloth was a design tradition nurtured by Kabaka Suuna II helps to explain the absence of information and evidence on patterned bark-cloth in all the other royal shrines visited, which also throws more light on the factors that could have contributed to the discontinuity of the practice in the subsequent royal dynasties. With the death of Kabaka Suuna II in 1856, patronage of patterned bark-cloth was to take new dimensions, as shall be discussed later. Kabaka Suuna II was succeeded by his son Mukabya, who was later renamed himself Muteesa.¹⁸ Kabaka Muteesa I (1856-1884) became famous for his revolutionary changes that culminated in further transformations in the bark-cloth industry.

4.2.6 Swahili-Arab Influence on the Bark-cloth Industry during Muteesa I's Reign

The Swahili-Arab presence in Buganda during the mid-nineteenth century did not have significant impact on the dress style of the Baganda mainly for two reasons: 1) bark-cloth continued to be an important fabric of the Baganda, given the fact that woven-cloth remained scarce, and 2) the sanctions on the acquisition of textiles earlier imposed by Kabaka Suuna II remained intact at the dawn of Kabaka Muteesa I's reign. However, significant changes occurred around 1867 when a caravan headed by a rich and influential merchant from Tabora arrived at Kabaka Muteesa I's palace at Nakawa, near Kampala. Khamis ibn Abdullah, originally from Muscat, presented to Kabaka Muteesa I a significant quantity of exotic goods including a variety of luxurious Arab textiles and garments that changed drastically the sartorial style of the Kabaka, giving him an "Arab

¹⁸ During the first few years of his reign, Mukabya continued with the legacy of his father Kabaka Suuna II, and as such, was very cruel to his subjects but after exposure to foreign influence, he was compelled to change his character, and decided to rename himself Muteesa, meaning that he had become more compromising [interview with the royal guides at Kasubi Royal Tombs – Nnabulagala, October 2002].

look”. Kaggwa reports that Kabaka Muteesa I distributed the textiles to his wives, to the princesses and to some favourite pages: Kayikonyi Omuwanika, Musisi Sabakaki and Basudde Ssaabawaali (as cited in Oded, 1974:96-98). Henceforth, Kabaka Muteesa I became famous among foreign visitors for his luxurious way of dress, which exemplified Swahili-Arab influence in Buganda. For example, Chaillé-Long gives a detailed description of Muteesa I’s style of dress at the time he met him in 1874:

M’tesa [*sic*]... was dressed very much after the fashion of the better class Arab merchants. The closely fitting coat that fell nearly to his feet was dark-blue cloth, trimmed with gold. He wore a turban and his general appearance was decidedly Arabic. From his waist was suspended a Turkish scimitar supported by a gold belt richly worked, said to be a present from the Sultan of Zanzibar (as quoted in Oded 1974: 98)

Similarly, in his letter to the *Daily Telegraph*, Henry Morton Stanley, a European explorer commented:

I confess I never saw an Arab or Musulman who attracted me so much as Khamis bin [*sic*] Abdullah, and it is no wonder that Mtesa, meeting a kindred spirit in the noble youth of Muscat, amazed at his handsome bearing, the splendour of his apparel, the display of his wealth, and the number of his slaves, fell in love with him...the Arab [Khamis ibn Abdullah] clothed Mtesa [*sic*] in the best that his wardrobe offered, he gave him gold embroidered jackets, fine white shirts, crimson slippers, swords, silk sashes, daggers and a revolving rifle, so that Speke’s and Grant’s presents seemed of necessity insignificant...(1875)

As more Swahili-Arab caravans arrived in Buganda, Kabaka Muteesa I became more attracted to their lifestyle, and developed a keen interest in many facets of Arab culture. Muteesa I’s adoption of Arab culture was politically motivated because, like his father Kabaka Suuna II, Muteesa I from time to time faced opposition from clan leaders who questioned the hegemony of the monarchy. Hence, it is arguable that associating

with foreigners of such a powerful calibre, and adopting an exotic type of dress was a potential means of augmenting Kabaka Muteesa I's status, and obtaining for him more recognition and approval among his subjects.

By 1875, Kabaka Muteesa I had declared Islam a state religion and had issued several decrees requiring all his subjects to observe Islamic law¹⁹. Kabaka Muteesa I encouraged his courtiers to subscribe to the new faith and to learn Arabic. In his royal palace, he turned the house of one of his wives into a Mosque.²⁰ He ordered his chiefs to greet him in Arabic only, and instructed them to greet each other in a similar style (Nakanyike-Musisi 1991: 120). Resistance by some Baganda "traditionalists" to change from the indigenous faith culminated in the massacre of "more than 1,500 people in 1875, including chiefs, slaves and common people (Kaggwa 1901:121-122). This massacre later caused superficial conversion of many Baganda to Islam, in order for them to save their necks from the edge of the sword. As a result of the continued conflict between the monarchy and the clan leaders, Kabaka Muteesa I devised the political strategy of "divide and rule" by extending the royal privilege of dressing in exotic textiles to those chiefs who supported his authority. Later, he made it a mandatory practice for all chiefs to wear imported garments. Zimbe, a Muganda historian and a former page at the palace of Kabaka Muteesa I, gives a detailed description of the official dress, prescribed for the Baganda chiefs:

¹⁹According to the Islamic teaching, five pillars of Islam are incumbent on every Muslim namely: the profession of faith, the performance of prayer, the giving of alms, fasting during the lunar month of Ramadan, and making pilgrimage (*Hajj*) to Mecca at least once, if possible (Baker 1995:15). Muteesa I declared "that the three rituals of regular prayers, fasting during [the month of] Ramadan, and eating lawful meat (slaughtered by a circumcised Muslim), must be considered obligatory and be strictly observed" (Oded 1974:71).

²⁰ Stanley claims that by the time Khamis returned to Tabora after one year's stay at Muteesa I's palace, he had succeeded in converting him to Islam (1878: 453).

“He [Kabaka Muteesa I] told his people the fashion of clothes they should put on. He said, his counsellors [*sic*] and chiefs should put on good clothes to make them look magnificent and this was the fashion he told them: - To have a loin cloth around the waist, and the cost of this was one cow. to put on Kanzu²¹ with embroidery in the front for which one had to give a very beautiful woman or a big tusk of ivory which cost 10,000 cowry shells. To put on sandals this cost a cow. To throw a coloured ...cloth on the shoulders which cost one tusk of ivory. To have Arabian belt of beads around the waist...which cost a woman or slave or a tusk of ivory. [For] his Saza (county) chiefs [he ordered them] to put on ...the Arab coats [which] cost six beautiful women each, and other chiefs next to the Saza [chiefs] to put on red or black Kanzu which cost four women and ...a red fez which cost one cow” (1939:26-27)²².

Muteesa I’s decision to change the sartorial code of the Baganda chiefs and later that of the rest of the Baganda had socio-economic and political connotations. As Patricia Baker reports, in the Islamic faith, every aspect of a Muslim life is theoretically governed by *Sharia*, the divine law, and thus, there is a law relating to dress, in terms of choice of fabric, colour, as well as guidelines on the choice of motifs for fabric design and decoration (1995:15).²³ As such, “rulers had a custom of bestowing robes of honour upon those whom they wished to reward” (Balfour-Paul 1997:15). Thus the Swahili-Arab influence coupled with Kabaka Muteesa I’s desire to maintain his socio-political authority, and to suppress the pressure from the *bataka* (heads of clans) were important factors that governed his decision to change the dress code of his subjects. In the process,

²¹ A white tunic of Arab origin, that reaches down to the ankles. The *kanzu* was eventually assimilated into the “traditional” dress of the Baganda men, and is still recognized as such, in the twenty-first-century.

²² Long before the arrival of the coastal traders, the ability to own slaves meant social and economic power among the Baganda. This reinforced critical ideas of domination, particularly, though not exclusively, along lines of gender and ethnicity (Reid 2002:170). For several centuries the Baganda had a tendency to plunder during war expeditions in their neighboring kingdoms of Bunyoro, Ankole and the Busoga Vassal State, women and children, as well as cows and goats, which they considered as items of value. But the commodification of slaves took on new proportions in the mid-nineteenth century as a means to acquire textiles and other exotic products.

²³ *Tiraz* [(dyed textiles and embroidered)] garments and decorative hangings were reserved for the rulers because they expressed their majesty.

the new sartorial code of the chiefs changed the aspirations of the rest of the ordinary Baganda. In the early 1870s, some Baganda commoners started to get more involved in ivory trade, directly though informally, with the coastal Swahili-Arab traders. As Richard Reid noted, “the fact that trade in certain goods- most notably cotton cloth and later firearms, was restricted by the Kabaka, and the fact that the Swahili-Arab traders were generally forbidden from venturing beyond the capital, should not lead us to exaggerate the control which the Kabaka exercised over commerce among the Ganda” (2002:158).

Around 1875, Muteesa I lifted the ban on textiles and allowed his officials to begin wearing the white *qamis* (Swahili-Arab form of shirt). Perhaps because of its religious connotations²⁴ and its neatness, the *qamis* became a popular garment among the notables and soon it came to be associated with people of chiefly status. Because it was aesthetically unappealing for a Muganda man to have twiggy legs, the *bakungu* (senior chiefs) adjusted the *qamis* to drape down to the ankles, in order to avoid exposing their legs. As opposed to hides (and in some cases bark-cloth), which required to be sewn into two pieces in order for one to have a fabric of a length sufficient to cover the entire body, with woven fabrics it was possible to get them at any length without having to join several pieces. Thus, for those *bakungu* who had small legs, the *qamis* provided some degree of concealment of their small limbs. In fact, the Baganda even coined a proverb in reference to forgiveness, namely, “He/she has had mercy on you as Kabaka Muteesa I

²⁴ White is considered in Islamic law as most fitting for Muslim men (Baker 1995:16-17). Besides, according to Sunni *hadith* (Islamic teaching) “Allah loves white clothes, and He has created Paradise white” and because of its associations of purity, brightness and loyalty, it is the colour for *Hajj* and the Muslim burial attire (Baker 1995: 15, 16-17).

had mercy upon his subjects with small-twiggy legs” literal meaning, (Akuddiddemu nga Muteesa bweyaddiramu ab’obugulu obutono).

However, it is important to note that because the distribution of imported textiles was contingent on one’s social status, which was attained through performance of duties at the royal palace, the distribution of textiles in the second half of the nineteenth century-Buganda remained within reach of only a few members of the Baganda society. Distribution of textiles was also based upon gender. Women as well as men in the lower positions had limited access to imported textiles. A number of women, both within and outside the palace, continued for several decades to wear bark-cloth. Therefore, meeting the sartorial demands of the women was a strong factor that contributed to the sustainability of the bark-cloth industry in the nineteenth century.

In the next section, I examine the impact of Western missionary intervention in Buganda during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. I analyze the Christian missionary ideologies and their influence on the social, cultural and political structures in Buganda. In particular, I interrogate the perception of the European missionaries towards the local artefacts, in this case, the bark-cloth of the Baganda.

4.3 European Missionaries to Buganda

The first direct contact made with Europe that led to the arrival of Christian missionaries in Buganda occurred in the year 1862, when J. H. Speke came searching for the source of the River Nile and thereby visited Kabaka Muteesa I’s palace at Mengo. Later, in 1872, Samuel Baker came in from the north, not as an explorer, but as a representative of the Khedive of Egypt, with the purpose of establishing Egyptian rule

over the upper reaches of the Nile. In 1875, Henry Morton Stanley, who had been on a Royal Geographical Society expedition, whose objective was to complete the unfinished work of Speke, also reached the Buganda royal capital. During his visit, Stanley introduced to Kabaka Muteesa I the subject of Christian religion and promised to send Western missionaries to Buganda. Thus, on his return to Britain, Stanley hurriedly made a famous appeal on November 14th 1875, through the *Daily Telegraph* and the *New York Herald* (the Newspapers he represented), for Christian missionaries to be sent to Buganda. To lure them, he added, “you need not fear to spend money upon such a mission, as Mtesa [*sic*] is sole ruler, and will repay its cost tenfold with ivory, coffee, otter skins of a very fine quality, or even in cattle, for the wealth of this country in all these products is immense” (as quoted in Kizza 1999:57). Stanley’s appeal caught the attention of several Christian missions in Europe and the United States, although immediate response came from the Church Missionary Society (CMS).

Founded in London in 1799 as a principle missionary body of the Church of England, the CMS was dedicated to promoting the welfare of the “underprivileged” members of society (Warren 1965:31). In relation to Africa, its members played an important role in the passage of several Bills by the British Parliament, in a bid to stop the trans-Atlantic slave trade, which had become an economic preoccupation among several countries in the West since the late fifteenth-century (Isichei 1995: 83). The trafficking of slaves from Africa (which actually began with the Arab infiltration of the Sub-Saharan region) had gone unchallenged until the era of Enlightenment (late eighteenth-century) when ideas concerning natural rights and political liberty started filtering into the Western society and a change in moral consciousness began to take

place. Christianity and the spread of the Gospel also provided an impetus for the humanitarian movement, which finally led to a change in popular opinion towards the slave trade. British evangelicals believed that the development of alternative forms of commerce was the surest way to eliminate this vice.

In 1807, British slave trade was abolished, and in 1833, a Bill for the Total Abolition of Colonial Slavery throughout the British dominions was passed, taking effect from 1 August 1834. Britain called upon other countries to follow her example by giving up the slave trade. However, at the East African coast where Britain had no direct influence, the slave trade continued to thrive.²⁵

In 1839, Thomas Buxton, a British evangelist and anti-slavery leader, published a book *African Slave Trade and Its Remedy*, in which he proposed several interventions to the problem of African slave trade. His ideologies inspired explorers and missionaries who infiltrated the interior of East Africa during the second half of the nineteenth-century. Buxton advocated the development of commercial enterprises, primarily cotton production, which he believed, would help to solve the problem:

Because it [cotton] requires little capital, yields a steady return, is in vast demand in Europe, and grows naturally in the soil of Africa...if Africa, when delivered from that evil which withers her produce, and paralyses her industry [referring to slave trade], can be made to supply us with the commodity which we so much need, she, in her turn, will be the customer of Europe to the same vast extent, for the manufactured goods which Europe produces (Buxton 1967[1839]: 332-335).

²⁵ It was not until the 1860s that David Livingstone, a renowned Scottish explorer, exposed the devastating impact of slave trade between East Africa and the Muslim world. The British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (BFASS), formed in 1839 with the objective of combating slavery internationally, switched attention from the trans-Atlantic slave trade, to the Indian Ocean. The BFASS recognised that without direct pressure from the British on the Sultan of Zanzibar and rulers in other parts of the Muslim world, the slave trade would continue. In 1873, the Sultan of Zanzibar was coerced by the British Government to sign a treaty abolishing the slave trade in his dominions. For further details on Anti-Slavery movements, refer to http://lrrc3.sas.upenn.edu/indianocean_group/ioslv4.html

Hence, when the CMS missionaries extended their evangelical activities to the kingdom of Buganda during the second half of the nineteenth-century, they were keen to combine an industrial element in their religious activities. In April 1876, the Committee of the CMS sent the first CMS missionary expedition to Buganda under the leadership of Lieutenant G. Shergold Smith, with a set of instructions concerning the objectives of their mission.²⁶

Firstly, the missionaries were to ‘convey to [Kabaka] Muteesa [I] and his people the message of Salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ, whereby they [the Baganda] may be made happy here and hereafter’; secondly, ‘to introduce...the knowledge of [Western] trades, arts and sciences’; and thirdly ‘to substitute lawful trade in place of the desolating traffic in slaves’.²⁷ The first two CMS missionaries: Lieutenant Shergold Smith and Rev C. T. Wilson finally arrived in Buganda on 30th June 1877. Two days later, they were ushered into the palace of Kabaka Muteesa I, and presented letters of introduction from the Foreign office and from the Committee of the CMS. In the CMS communication, which was an official response to Muteesa I’s request to Stanley for a Christian mission to come to Buganda, it was made clear to Kabaka Muteesa I that the “greatness” of England, which Muteesa I had heard about, was due to the word of God which England possessed. ‘Her laws’, the letter added, ‘are framed in accordance with it, her throne is established upon it, her people are made happy by it...our desire is that your throne

²⁶ The initial party of eight comprised of Lieutenant Shergold Smith who sailed first with two artisans [not named], Rev. C. T. Wilson, Mr. T. O’Neill, Dr. John Smith, Mr. James Robertson and Mr. Alexander M. Mackay.

²⁷ Instructions delivered by the Committee of the CMS to the members of the mission party proceeding to the Victoria Nyanza (as cited in Gale 1959:14-15).

should be made secure, your country be made great, and your people made happy by the same means' (ibid).²⁸

The contents of the letter, which flagged the social, economic and political benefits associated with the Western civilization, prompted Kabaka Muteesa I to open the gates of his palace to Christianity. In 1879, another Christian mission of the Roman Catholic faith also arrived in Buganda. Two French missionaries, Père Lourdel and Reverend Brother Amans of the Roman Catholic Société des Missionnaires d'Afrique arrived in Buganda on February 17th and were received at the Kabaka's palace on February 23rd. The arrival of the French missionaries, moreover, of the Roman Catholic faith, was a surprise to the CMS missionaries, who regarded it as a deliberate attempt to jeopardize the Anglican missionary activities, and the foreseen British interests in Buganda.²⁹ The new twist of events culminated in serious rows between the two Christian religious groups at Kabaka Muteesa I's palace, each fighting as hard as possible to win the Kabaka and his subjects towards their side. However, despite the serious rows and conflict between the two religious factions, they were both united at preaching the word of Jesus Christ, and both were united in the fight against Islam, a religion that they found already established in Buganda. The Christian missionaries were opposed to Islam

²⁸ The arrival of CMS missionaries was timely for Kabaka Muteesa I, who was at a time, threatened by a possible invasion by the Khedive of Egypt that would lead to the annexation of his kingdom. Kabaka Muteesa I had realized that his kingdom was sandwiched between two powerful Islamic forces namely, the Sultanate of Zanzibar, in the south, and that of Egypt in the north. The commitment of the Western missionaries to safeguard the *Kabakaship* of Buganda was a big relief to Muteesa I and he considered the newcomers not just as missionaries, but also as representatives of England, a powerful country. As H. P. Gale claims, on the very next day after their arrival, Muteesa I requested the CMS missionaries to make gunpowder and shot for him, but they declined and instead, promised to teach the Baganda whatever "useful" arts, they themselves knew, and those that may be known by their colleagues, who were still on the way to Buganda (1959:16). Having been assured of the political stability and economic prospects in his kingdom, Kabaka Muteesa I opened the gates of his palace to Christianity.

²⁹ We should be reminded that religion had always been a serious political issue in the history of the English monarchy and there had always been tension between Catholicism and Anglican Protestantism.

not only because its theology was not in accordance with the teachings of Jesus Christ; but rather, because they wanted to get rid of its proponents the Swahili-Arabs, whose slave trade activities, they believed, had devastating effects to humanity, and more so, impaired the spread of evangelism in Africa.

The differing foreign religious ideologies³⁰ and the associated exchange of verbal artillery by the three religious factions sparked confusion and mixed feelings among members of the royal domain, and caused many to resist the new religions. Significant among these was the *Nnamasole* (Queen-mother), who strongly opposed the concept of a foreign god. The “traditionalists” interpreted the missionary concept of salvation as a tool of Western hegemony that had to be resisted. Yet, for Kabaka Muteesa I, the foreign missionaries represented powerful states upon which he could rely for political assistance, as had been implied in their communication. Kabaka Muteesa I’s interest in securing economic prospects and security of his kingdom enabled him to play a tactical role in keeping the three religious groups in Buganda despite the increasing competition and hatred that had developed between them at that time. The continued mutual contradictions, conflicts and recriminations between the Europeans and the Swahili-Arabs provoked Kabaka Muteesa I to constantly change from one religion to another; in the process, many of the Baganda at the royal palace were kept in a state of confusion, uncertain about which religion to follow. With the increased public clashes, Kabaka Muteesa I announced in the *Lukiiko* (royal council) of 23rd December 1879 the abolition of foreign religions, and ordered his subjects to return to indigenous religious tradition. This period of uncertainty favoured both continuity and change in the socio-cultural

³⁰ Unlike the *Kiganda* indigenous religion, the three foreign religions in Buganda were based on a monotheistic ideology.

functions of the *lubugo* (bark-cloth). Likewise, under these circumstances, the symbolic interpretation of bark-cloth also kept in a continuous shift, dependent on the political pressure at the palace. Kabaka Muteesa I's reign ended in 1884, following his death from a sexually transmitted disease, which troubled him for several years.

4.3.1 Missionary Attitudes towards Indigenous Culture

At the royal court, the first students of Christianity were Kabaka Muteesa I himself, his chiefs, the royal wives, princesses and royal pages. Coming from a differently civilized background, the missionaries could not easily articulate the functioning of the Baganda social structure. In their view, the Baganda society, like many other African societies, was so much imbued with religious feeling that it was hard for the missionaries to draw a line of demarcation by which one could tell where religion ended, and social customs began. Yet, it was their objective to come and save the Baganda from their “satanic” behaviours, and to convert them into a new people, both in body and soul. As such, the missionaries called upon Kabaka Muteesa I and his people to give up all Kiganda cultural beliefs and practices including among others: belief in deities, consultation of diviners, child initiation and “twin” ceremonies and dances³¹, which supported to a great extent, the production and usage of bark-cloth in Buganda. From their own Western perspective, the above activities were contrary to the doctrines of Christianity. This missionary approach was not unique to Buganda because elsewhere

³¹ The Baganda venerate the birth of twins and for that reason, they consider the mother of twins Nnaalongo, the father of twins Ssaalongo, and the twins themselves, to be sacred. Because of the general belief that the twins transcend death, the Baganda always try to establish a good relationship with the whole realm of the twin world, and therefore before any cultural function takes place, they invoke the power of twins by singing twin songs. Nannyonga-Tamusuza (2001) expounds the subject in chapters two and three.

in Africa, they struggled to uproot the indigenous cultures, in order to replace them with a brand new set of “superior” beliefs and values.

Whereas Christian missionaries had difficulties in their battle against ritualistic images in other parts of Africa (for example in West Africa), their job was far simpler in Buganda. With religious carvings mostly absent in Buganda, missionaries encountered a few ritual objects that posed serious threat to their religious and industrial activities. Bark-cloth for example, was a considerable threat because it featured prominently in most of the indigenous ritual activities. It was used for embellishing shrines, for making and or preserving ritual objects, and as a backdrop for the veneration of deities. The Baganda also used bark-cloth in performing traditional rites associated with birth (especially of twins), naming children, marriage, illness, death, burial, during succession rites, and while observing various taboos in their day-to-day economic and social life. The missionaries, hence, took every opportunity to discourage the usage of bark-cloth. It was mystified as a “satanic” fabric, a connotation that has lingered on in some quarters right up to the present day. Several scholars have noted that burning ritual objects became a prerequisite for the Baganda to convert to Christianity, and later it followed that the most honoured catechists and chiefs, royals, and the rest of the Baganda Christians were those who had the courage to burn ‘pagan’ shrines in their areas, and cultural artefacts in their possession (Lugira 1970; Waliggo 1976; Sanyal 2000:63). For example, in 1886, *Omumbejja* Clara Nalumansi, guardian of the royal tombs, converted to Catholicism and as stated in Father Lourdel’s communication to his superior Lavigerie, dated June 25th 1886, “she used her enthusiasm and imprudence of a newly baptized to burn all the traditional relics entrusted to her keeping...She even destroyed her own umbilical cord

which most people preserved with reverence” (as quoted in Waliggo 1976: 46). Because almost all ritual objects were either made out of, or preserved in bark-cloth, the fabric assumed highly charged connotations among missionaries, and to the present, bark-cloth is regarded with mixed feelings among different quarters of the Baganda Christian society.

4.3.2 Impact of Religious Power Struggles during Mwanga II's Reign

Kabaka Mwanga II, who succeeded his father Kabaka Muteesa I at the age of 18, realized the extent of power struggle among the representatives of the three foreign religious groups at his royal court but lacked the experience of his father to deal with the prevailing confusion at the palace, and to take overall control of the situation.³² In an attempt to maintain his authority Kabaka Mwanga II, who had expressed inclination towards the Swahili-Arab Moslems at the time of his accession to the royal throne, decided to jeopardize missionary activities by banning his subjects from converting to the Christian faith, and threatening to put to death any offenders. Indeed the massacre of 1885 in which more than thirty royal-pages who had converted to Christianity were burnt alive at Namugongo (later canonized as Uganda Martyrs) was a direct result of this power struggle.³³

³² Kabaka Muteesa I had managed to keep representatives of the three foreign religious groups at his palace without necessarily favouring any one group over the others.

³³ In fact, some religious historians argue that the main reason for that fateful event was because the royal-pages refused to succumb to Kabaka Mwanga II's sexual demands. It is alleged that in addition to trade, the Swahili-Arab traders had also introduced sodomy in the Buganda royal court during Kabaka Muteesa I's reign. However, some scholars (Nannyonga-Tamusuza 2001) argue that given the extent of the power struggles between the Christians and the Moslems, it is possible that the allegation was fabricated by the missionaries to de-popularize the Islamic religion.

By 1886 and 1887, the situation had further deteriorated thereby forcing the Christian missionaries to begin vacating Buganda. In September 1888, the Baganda chiefs got united irrespective of their religious affiliations and ousted Kabaka Mwanga II from the throne. Mwanga II fled to the southernmost county of Buddu, and was replaced by his elder brother Kiweewa whose reign lasted for a short time. Upon failure to convert to Islam, Kiweewa was captured and killed by the Moslem militants, who constituted the strongest force at the time. His brother Kalema who was more willing to promote Islamic interests in Buganda was enthroned. Henceforth, a series of religious wars broke out during which each of the religious factions tried to assert its own position in the politics of the kingdom. With the help of Catholic missionaries Mwanga reclaimed his throne. Historical events just discussed indicate that in a period of about three months, there was change of reign three times, and many Baganda fled to neighbouring states to avoid the insurgence. A significant number of Christian followers fled to the western kingdom of Ankole, which was later to become a significant outlet for bark-cloth during the first quarter of the twentieth century. I will come to the detailed discussion on the patronage of bark-cloth in Ankole in the next chapter.

4.4 The Scramble for Africa

As religious struggles were taking place in Buganda, European colonial powers were in the meantime, engaged in concluding treaties by which they sliced Africa into several portions of colonial interest. The story about the scramble for Africa is so well known that it requires only the briefest of a recapitulation. In 1885, the Berlin Act, which legalized the division of Africa into colonial spheres of interest, was signed. In 1886,

another treaty was signed between Great Britain and Germany, the two colonial powers that had gained “rights” of colonization over the region of East Africa. By the same treaty, the two colonial powers agreed on the boundary between their respective ‘spheres of interest’ in the region extending from the shores of the Indian Ocean to the eastern shores of Lake Victoria although nothing was mentioned about the area at the western shores of the lake, which constitutes the kingdom of Buganda. In 1887, yet another treaty was signed, which restricted the annexation of any further territory in the hinterland East Africa without consent of the two colonizing powers.³⁴ In 1888, an independent trading company, the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC), was given a British royal charter to administer the newly acquired territory, on behalf of the British Government, and to prepare the ground for effective colonization of hinterland East Africa. While it was by chance that these treaties coincided with the religio-political turbulence in Buganda, it followed that these two independent factors constituted the yarn out of which the fabric of the British “Protectorate” in Buganda was to be neatly woven.

Meanwhile, in Buganda, Kabaka Mwanga II who was deposed during that same year, 1888, took refuge at a Catholic Mission on the southern shores of Lake Victoria (in the German territory). In order to re-establish his *Kabakaship*, Mwanga II sought political support through the missionaries that had fled to the southern shores of Lake Victoria. Although his effort to convince the CMS missionaries on the matter were futile, nonetheless, Mwanga II received sympathy from the Catholic missionaries who rallied their converts in Bukumbi (southern shores of Lake Victoria) and convinced them to join the Baganda Christian refugees in their political struggle. With additional help from the Baganda royal marines of Ssesse Islands, Mwanga II was restored to the royal throne in

³⁴ For details see McDermott (1893).

October 1889, but his reign lasted for just one month. He was again deposed by his brother, the Moslem incumbent Kalema; Mwanga II fled to Ssesse Islands though he later managed to reclaim the throne in February 1890.

A fortnight later, Karl Peters, a representative of the German East Africa Company (GEAC) arrived in Buganda on a mission to annex the kingdom of Buganda to the Germany East African territory. Given the political pressure in Buganda at the time, and on the advice of the Catholic missionaries, whose home country France had no political ambitions in Buganda, Kabaka Mwanga II accepted Karl Peters' proposition thereby giving away the sovereignty of his kingdom to the GEAC. The Buganda-Germany treaty was of little help to the increasingly worsening religious-political situation in Buganda. Instead, it prompted immediate intervention by the British counterparts, the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC), who regarded Karl Peters' treaty as an act of German hostility and a violation of the 1886 and 1887 treaties, referred to above.³⁵ Hence, in April 1890, F. J. Jackson was sent to Buganda to coerce Kabaka Mwanga II to nullify the treaty signed with Karl Peters, and to convince him to sign a new one giving the rights of 'Protection' to IBEAC (Gale 1959:49).

Meanwhile, in Europe negotiations were going on to try and resolve the matter once and for all. Consequently, the Anglo-German hinterland treaty was signed on 1st July 1890, by which the two colonial powers agreed to place the boundaries of their territories at the first southern latitude thereby confining the biggest portion of Buganda

³⁵ It is worth noting that while Britain and German had signed treaties in relation to the region east and south of Lake Victoria, the two colonial powers had not yet entered into any treaty regarding the region to the western shores, which comprises of Buganda.

into the sphere of British colonial influence.³⁶ In September 1890, Captain F.D. Lugard, a man of long colonial experience in India, Burma and Sudan, was sent to Buganda as the permanent resident representative of the IBEAC with instructions to offer Mwanga II the Company's protection and to stop him from making concessions to or entering into agreements with other countries. Lugard arrived in Buganda in December 1890, and after a weeklong deliberation with Kabaka Mwanga II, he was finally able to get the treaty signed thereby transferring the rights of protection of the kingdom of Buganda to the IBEAC.³⁷

It should be remembered that the partitioning of Africa was politically motivated in order to serve the interest of the metropolitan economy. As a result of the technological achievements realized in the wake of the industrial revolution, that allowed the manufacture of cheap products in Europe, and later North America, it became essential for the industrial West to find raw materials for its fast-growing industries. Equally important, the West had to look for new markets for its products, most especially textiles, which constituted one of the main items of manufacture in Europe during the nineteenth-century.

³⁶ Following this agreement, the new borders drawn to separate the British sphere of colonial influence from that of Germany culminated in the division of people of similar ethnic backgrounds into different nationalities. In the case of Buganda for example, the southernmost county of Buddu was divided at one-degree southern latitude, causing some of the Bannabuddu (residents of Buddu) in the area north of the Kagera River to fall under the German East African territory while others remained in the British sphere of interest. However, apart from the artificial borders, the two peoples continued to represent similar socio-cultural activities including bark-cloth production. The artificial-border theory hence helps to shed some light on the seemingly contradictory-history of patterned bark-cloth in pre-colonial Buganda. It has been claimed through oral sources that the embellishment of bark-cloth with design and colour was an appropriated phenomenon from Bukoba in northern Tanzania, given the similarities in the ethnographic bark-cloth artifacts collected from Buganda and Bukoba at the turn of the twentieth-century.

³⁷ The intervention of European trading companies was not confined to Buganda alone. In 1885 the German East African Company took control of Tanganyika (Tanzania), and in 1888, the Imperial British East Africa Company took over from the local people of Kenya (Tiberondwa 1998:31).

4.5 Concluding the Chapter

The second half of the nineteenth-century was a dynamic period that brought many new changes in Buganda. It has been noted that the arrival of the Swahili-Arab traders not only facilitated the transfer of exotic products into Buganda, but also introduced ideas that contributed to the development of a lucrative industry in patterned bark-cloth although this was not to last for a long time, due to the increase in trade in woven clothes. As textiles became a popular trade item at the royal palace, the royal patronage of bark-cloth, upon which the bark-cloth industry devolved, started to diminish. Further decline of the bark-cloth industry in Buganda was facilitated by the introduction of Christianity in the latter quarter of the century. The complacency by the church towards local artefacts had a negative impact on the overall production and usage of bark-cloth in Buganda. In the next chapter, I shall consider the British economic policy, and its impact on the local industries of the Baganda, especially the bark-cloth industry.

5 BRITISH COLONIAL POLICY AND ITS IMPACT ON THE BARK-CLOTH INDUSTRY OF THE BAGANDA DURING THE FIRST QUARTER OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is an elaboration of the argument developed in chapter four with respect to the impact of non-African contact on the bark-cloth industry of the Baganda. It focuses on the first quarter of the twentieth-century: a period characterized by the transformation of the kingdom of Buganda from a state of self-governance to a British protectorate under the rule of the British Government. British colonial rule in Buganda was formalized in 1900, after the signing of the infamous Uganda Agreement¹ (see appendix 5). More specifically in this chapter, I analyze its impact on the native system of social administration, upon which devolved the production, supply and symbolic significance of bark-cloth.

The British political concept of ‘Indirect Rule’ was based on the premise that “Africans had to be ruled so that they could become civilized. But to allow them to develop ‘along their own lines’, they had to be controlled through mediation of their local agencies such as chiefs and kings” (Sanyal 2000:31-32). This political ideology, alternatively known as the “Dual Mandate”, was already in effect in other British colonies elsewhere in the world. For example, it had first been applied in the Asiatic states in the 1870s, and it was Capt. F. D. Lugard, who refined it to adapt it to the African

¹ It is more appropriate to refer to it as the Buganda Agreement of 1900 because it was only applicable within the boundaries of the kingdom of Buganda. I therefore refer to it as [B]uganda Agreement in the rest of the thesis.

context.² As R. C. Pratt reports, in some cases, indirect rule involved the appointment of councils of traditional elders whose authority hardly extended beyond the boundaries of a single village, and who thus had to be induced to federate with the neighbouring authorities. In other cases, indirect rule meant the recognition of a powerful native ruler [who had] authority over hundreds of thousands of subjects (1960: 163), as was the case with the kingdom of Buganda. Nonetheless, what was most important for the colonizing authority was to establish a system through which they would easily and effectively get access to the natural resources of the colonized territories.

As I argue, this politics of indirect rule that resulted in the change of the political administrative structure of the kingdom prompted major transformations in the production, patronage and meaning of bark-cloth in Buganda. However, whereas British foreign intervention played a major role in the transformation of the Baganda bark-cloth industry, there were also other endogenous factors that contributed to the transformation process. The long established contact between the Baganda and the Bahima was a significant example. However, it was as a result of the hut-tax system introduced by the Protectorate Government that this contact was intensified, which resulted in the revival of the art of bark-cloth decoration, as I discuss in the second part of the chapter.

For purposes of clarity, I have found it important and necessary to begin this chapter with a discussion on the activities of the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC), which had received in 1888, a British royal charter to administer the East African interior and to levy tax from the indigenous population on behalf of the British metropolitan government. Their influence, as I discuss shortly, paved the way for more

² For details see Lugard (1965).

significant political agreements between the Baganda and the British that eventually proved disastrous to the bark-cloth industry of the Buganda.

5.2 Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC) in Buganda (1890-1892)

The background to IBEAC's intervention in Buganda was based on the fact that earlier treaties signed between the two colonial powers (German and Britain) that culminated in the partitioning of East Africa had not included Buganda, yet this kingdom had a wealth of natural resources. As Frederick Muteesa II, Kabaka of Buganda (1939-1967) mentions "Ivory, an advanced people with fertile land and perhaps a wish for European goods and gods, an essential piece of land for the Cape-to-Cairo route – these were reasons enough for wishing to annex the land to the north of Lake Victoria" (1967:48). It was, therefore, a matter of urgency for the British to step in and try to secure the region of Buganda before it was grabbed by their counterparts and rivals, the Germans. With a capital fund of Two Hundred and Forty Thousand pounds (£240,000), IBEAC, under the chairmanship of Sir William Mackinnon, one of the wealthiest men in Britain at the time of the colonization of Buganda, and whose regional offices were based in the Kenyan territory, proposed the construction of a rail line from the coast into the interior of East Africa. The purpose of the railway construction was to ease the transportation of raw materials and supplies to and from the East African interior. The first phase of the railway line was to be constructed from Mombasa (a key trade centre at the East African coast) reaching Nairobi, Kenya's capital. However, it was also found necessary to extend the railway line as far as Kisumu, at the eastern shores of Lake Victoria, where it would be possible to ferry the raw materials by steamer across Lake

Victoria from Buganda to the coast, and the manufactured goods from the coast to Buganda.

The main objectives of the IBEAC intervention in Buganda were threefold: 1) to administer the kingdom of Buganda on behalf of Her Britannic Majesty's Government; 2) to secure raw materials for the British industries; and 3), to establish a market for British products, despite the fact that this region had for half a century been dominated by Swahili-Arab traders.

Initially, apart from ivory, which was highly desired in the manufacture of pianos, there were almost no 'exportable' items from Buganda that could be considered of use to the British industries. Therefore, the IBEAC gambled with the limited range of potential trade items in order to sustain its economic activities in Buganda. Hence, in addition to ivory, a variety of hides and skins for the manufacture of leather-products became principle exports from Buganda. On the list, was soon added Buganda's wild life including among others: young zebras, wild pigs, hippos and elephants (Ehrlich 1962a: 25). Though painstakingly, IBEAC persevered in order to get its economic policy on course. However, its activities were impaired by heavy financial losses and the lack of financial backing from the British Metropolitan Government, which they (IBEAC) supposedly represented in Buganda. Muteesa II mentions that the Company was losing £40,000 a year yet there seemed no hope of trade in Buganda that could offset such a huge deficit (1967:54). Having failed to convince Her Britannic Majesty's Government to commit sufficient resources towards the construction of the railway line upon which lay the commercial prospects of the Company, and given the substantial loss already incurred, the IBEAC decided to pull out of Buganda and thus handed over the

administration of the kingdom to the British metropolitan government.³ Captain F. D. Lugard, resident representative of the IBEAC left Buganda towards the end of 1892 but the Company carried on with its administrative role for a few more months until March 17, 1893 when Sir Gerald Portal, the first acting British Commissioner, arrived at Mengo Palace. As I explain in the next section, a few more treaties were signed between the Baganda top administrative officials and the new representatives of the British Government, which culminated in the birth of a British Protectorate in the deeper interior of East Africa that was later to transcend the kingdom of Buganda to include other regions that form the present-day Uganda.

5.3 Birth of the Uganda British Protectorate

On April 1, 1893, the Union Flag, a symbol of British colonial-rule, was raised at Kampala hill (not far from the royal palace) thus replacing the IBEAC flag. A month later, a new treaty was drawn between Kabaka Mwanga II and Sir Gerald Portal, by which Buganda was brought under direct British colonial rule. However, a formal declaration of Buganda as a British Protectorate was to be made a year later, following a new treaty signed between Mwanga II and Henry Edward Colvile.⁴ A core administrative staff was recruited from England, and formal administrative bodies were created to run the political and administrative affairs of the Protectorate. In 1895, E. J. L. Berkley was appointed Her Britannic Majesty's Commissioner for Uganda, and a sum of £50,000 was

³ After IBEAC had pulled out, the Metropolitan government eventually went ahead in 1895 and constructed the railway line from Mombasa to Nairobi, but the extension (code-named 'Uganda Railway') from Nairobi to Kisumu at the eastern shores of Lake Victoria was not completed until 1902.

⁴ The formal announcement of a British Protectorate was made on 18th June 1894, but it was not until 27th August 1895 that the Protectorate came into official existence. For details of this treaty and the earlier treaties, see Low and Pratt (1960: 10).

allocated from the British Treasury to kick-start the newly formed British Protectorate (Nabudere 1980: 28). With the new administrative structure in place, a serious plan was unveiled to make the Protectorate self-sustaining economically.⁵ By the treaty of 1894, the assessment and collection of taxes, as well as the disposal of revenues of the kingdom became a responsibility of Her Britannic Majesty's Government. As I discuss in the next few paragraphs, the birth of the British Protectorate expedited the transformation of the social, economic, and political structures of Buganda, thereby prompting further changes in the cultural fabric of the kingdom. Most significantly, the power of the Kabaka, upon whom the existence of the kingdom and the production and patronage of bark-cloth was contingent, became highly compromised.

Firstly, the Kabaka of Buganda was made a subordinate to the British Commissioner whose duties stretched without limit, to the extent of encroaching on the chairmanship of the *Lukiiko* (the royal council), the supreme governing body of the kingdom (Low 1962:12). Until then, the chairmanship of the *Lukiiko* had been an uncontested position, for it automatically belonged to the Kabaka, who then appointed other members, and reserved himself all the powers to dismiss any member who failed to perform his duties. By imposing himself as chairman of the royal council, the British Commissioner not only overshadowed the Kabaka of Buganda but also gained close access to the *bakungu* (senior royal administrative chiefs), whose support was going to be required, for the British colonial economic policy to succeed.

Secondly, whereas by tradition the Kabaka had full authority over the wealth of natural resources in his kingdom, under the new system, decisions relating to the

⁵ For a comprehensive list of Uganda administrators from the colonial period to the present, see Appendix 4.

collection of internal revenues as well as exportation of resources out of Buganda could not be made without consultation of the office of the British Commissioner. To substantiate my argument, I draw on a well-publicized incident of 1896 during which, Kabaka Mwanga II fell in trouble with the Protectorate administrators for having engaged in direct economic transaction of ivory with the Swahili-Arab traders. A very heavy fine (in ivory value) was imposed on the Kabaka by Berkeley, the Commissioner of the Protectorate (Ingham 1958: 70). This incident heavily undermined the power of Kabaka Mwanga II, and aggravated the political misunderstandings between the British Commissioner and the Kabaka of Buganda. Some Baganda chiefs, who were quick to spot the likely economic and political benefits of collaborating with the British, established a link with the new administration. Hence, upon realizing that he was no longer in control of the affairs of his kingdom, Kabaka Mwanga II quit the royal palace in 1897 and fled to the southern county of Buddu to organize a revolution against the British Protectorate Government. However, Kabaka Mwanga II was arrested two years later and deported to the Seychelles Islands in the Indian Ocean, and that marked the end of his Kingship.⁶

With the absence of Kabaka Mwanga II, the British officials were now at liberty to make any political adjustments that were in favour of the colonial policy. Mwanga's two-year old son, Daudi Chwa II, was installed on the royal throne. However, because he was an infant, a trio of regents was selected: Christian converts Apollo Kaggwa and Zakaria Kizito Kisingiri of the Anglican faith, and Stansilas Mugwanya, who was a follower of the Roman Catholic religion, to care-take of the administration of the kingdom. The coronation of Daudi Chwa II (1897-1939) was in total contrast to the

⁶ Kabaka Mwanga died in the Seychelles Islands in 1903.

social customs of the Baganda. According to the royal succession customs, the successor to the throne was made legitimate only after he had fulfilled the official ceremony of *okubikka akabugo*, (covering the body of the fallen monarch with a piece of bark-cloth specially made for the occasion). In this case, the ceremony of *okubikka akabugo* was meant to signify more importantly, the transfer of active authority and responsibility to the new Kabaka, than to celebrate the end of one reign and the beginning of another. Hence, the fact that Kabaka Chwa II ascended the throne when his father was still alive was a transformation of the customs of royal succession in Buganda.

By penetrating the royal administrative council, the British administrators were therefore, able to influence the local chiefs to become more receptive to the ideas and plans of the Protectorate Government. Consequently, this penetration dislodged the traditional system of governance that fetishized the personality of the Kabaka as the supreme head of the kingdom, and the chief patron of the bark-cloth industry. Therefore, while analyzing the cultural transformations relating to the bark-cloth industry of the Baganda, it is impossible to ignore the political impact of the British Protectorate administration.

Moreover, in December 1899, Sir Harry Johnston, a man of long experience in African colonial administration was appointed Governor of the Uganda Protectorate. Johnston was formerly in West Africa where he served as the Commissioner of British Central Africa (present Malawi) between 1889 and 1896. There, Johnston established a hut-tax system, which he replicated in Buganda when he was asked to design the [B]uganda Agreement of 1900, by which the terms and conditions of British Protection of the kingdom of Buganda were made explicit. The [B]uganda Agreement of 1900 was a

more binding treaty, and it thenceforth nullified the treaties earlier signed by the Baganda and the pioneer British colonial administrators. In the next section I analyze parts of this Agreement that are pertinent to the focus of the current study. I examine the implications of the Agreement towards the transformation of bark-cloth industry of the Baganda. As I argue, the colonial administration of the kingdom and the land reforms, were important factors to the transformation of the patronage and symbolic significance of bark-cloth.

5.4 [B]uganda Agreement of 1900 and Its Impact on the Bark-cloth Industry

To a greater extent, the [B]uganda Agreement of 1900 defined the political relationship between the British Protectorate and the Buganda legislative body. As Nakanyike Musisi has observed, the Agreement had three main objectives: 1) to pacify the three warring religious factions and to bring peace and stability to the kingdom of Buganda; 2) to reduce the heavy cost borne by Britain in administering Buganda [by turning the Protectorate into a self-sustaining state capable of producing sufficient amount of raw materials that could be exported to meet the fast-growing British industrial economy]; and 3) to reward the collaborators, and to ensure their continued support in maintaining law and order (1991:153). In order to realize its objectives, the British Protectorate administration, under the doctrine of ‘Indirect Rule’, pegged its activities on the native administrative structure of the Kabaka and the *bakungu* (administrative chiefs, and members of the royal council). Moreover, one CMS missionary in Buganda rightly observed:

Every member of the tribe gives the highest honour to the king, respects the ruling of his chiefs and tends to follow the lead of those in power, not only in things political, but also in matters religious. Consequently, the opinions of a chief are commonly the convictions of his people, and in

winning the adherence of a man in authority you win the adherence of the majority of his subjects (as quoted in Furley and Watson. 1978:95).

Their observation resonates with the objectives of the [B]uganda Agreement of 1900 by which the hybridization of the administrative structure of Buganda became legally binding, and thus marked the beginning of the downfall of the kingship system of administration in Buganda, upon which the patronage and production of bark-cloth was anchored.

As earlier pointed out, prior to British colonial intervention, Buganda had a centralized system of government under the authority of the Kabaka whose administration was centred at the royal capital. In order to administer the kingdom, the chiefs collected tax on behalf of the Kabaka. The tax was in form of *ensimbi* (cowries), a major form of currency until the early twentieth-century, and in various articles including, among others bark-cloth, hoes, salt and foodstuff, which the chiefs and their subjects collected and carried to the capital for royal usage. Out of the collection, the Kabaka retained half of the amount, and the rest of the articles were distributed to the *Nnamasole* (queen-mother), the *lubuga* (queen-sister), the *bakembuga* (the royal harem), and the *bakungu* (administrative chiefs at the highest hierarchy), and the rest returned to the county chiefs.⁷

Bark-cloth was among the most important tax products collected. Roscoe reports that every married man in Buganda paid, twice a year, twenty-one pieces of bark-cloth as tax (1911:252). As a result, in every household, several trees were reserved specifically for the manufacture of bark-cloth for the Kabaka. Likewise, a few bark-cloth trees were reserved for the area chief. Considering the fact that each bark-cloth tree is harvested

⁷ Interview with Katarina Kikome of Kasubi Royal Tombs 18/10 2002. Also see Mair, Lucy (1934:133), and Richards A. I. *et al* (ed.), (1973:50).

once a year, it means that each family planted more than twenty bark-cloth trees specifically for royal purposes. It is, therefore, possible to argue that the transformations in the administrative structure of the kingdom, and the land reforms that followed, obstructed the mind of the Baganda and diverted their attention away from participating in such activities like bark-cloth production that were meant for the benefit of the community.

By virtue of Article 6 of the [B]uganda Agreement of 1900, the Kabaka and the county chiefs were to serve in the interest of the new colonial administration, and to recognize the suzerainty of Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain:

So long as the Kabaka, Chiefs, and people of [B]uganda shall conform to the laws and regulations instituted for their governance by Her Majesty's Government and shall co-operate loyally with Her Majesty's Government in the organization and administration of the said Kingdom of [B]uganda, Her Majesty's Government agrees to recognize the Kabaka of [B]uganda as the native ruler of the province of [B]uganda under Her Majesty's protection and over-rule (As quoted in Low and Pratt 1960:352).

Under Articles 15-18, the 1900 [B]uganda agreement formally laid out the system of land tenure, which ratified the allocation of private and official land to chiefs, in a system akin to freehold (*mailo*) tenure. The alterations defied the historical traditions of land tenure in Buganda that vested the rights over land in the clans, under the leadership of the Kabaka who also held the title of *Ssaabataka*, "overall chief in charge of the land of Buganda". In essence, the Kabaka was stripped of his exclusive land ownership rights, and his authority was significantly undermined because he was no longer *Ssaabataka*. The Kabaka became just one among thousands of chiefs who were allotted portions of land by the colonial administrators. On the contrary, the new land tenure system made the

bakungu into a land-owning and hereditary oligarchy, no longer totally dependent on the portion given to them by the Kabaka.

Under Article 15, out of the 19,600 square miles estimated to have constituted the kingdom of Buganda, at the time of drawing the Agreement, the Kabaka was allotted 350 square miles while each of the *abamasaza* (chiefs of counties) was allocated as private property 8 square miles, in addition to the 8 square miles of official estate attached to the office of County chiefs. Details relating to the redistribution of land in the kingdom of Buganda can be found in Appendix 5.

Therefore, it would be no surprise that the above alterations in the land tenure system that granted freehold tenure to the chiefs, was bound to cause significant transformations to the production and patronage of bark-cloth during the first half of the twentieth-century. For purposes of easy administration, and in a delicate balance of power between representatives of the three foreign religious factions, the kingdom of Buganda was divided into twenty counties, most of which were based upon the old territorial jurisdictions. However, each of the counties was to be administered by a chief whose appointment though made by the Kabaka, was subject to confirmation by the Commissioner, who was the principle representative of Her Britannic Majesty's Government.

Article 9 of the [B]uganda Agreement of 1900 stipulated that the main duties of the chiefs included: 1) administering justice among the natives dwelling in [their] respective counties; 2) assessment and collection of taxes [*not on the Kabaka's behalf but that of the British Protectorate Government*] (emphasis added); 3) maintenance of the main roads passing through their respective counties; and 4) general supervision of native

affairs. However, it is worthy noting that although the above duties of the county chiefs were cast out of the historical model of leadership in Buganda, they (the chiefs) were no longer meant to serve the interest of the Kabaka, but that of the British Protectorate government. As Lugard similarly revealed, “Though the Suserain power imposes the taxes and the general rate is fixed by the Governor[,] the actual assessment is in the hands of the native ruler and his representatives [so that] it appears to the tax payer as a tax imposed by his own native ruler” (as quoted in Low and Pratt 1960:164). In return for their services, the chiefs were guaranteed a subsidy of £200 a year, in addition to the substantial pieces of freehold land titles (8sq.miles each) accorded to them. By the time the allotment was completed in 1909, over 3,700 title-holders had been registered, and by 1926, these holdings had multiplied to almost 10,000 (Musisi 1991: 155). On the other hand, the Kabaka who originally had authority over the revenues from the entire kingdom was to receive £1,500 a year direct from the British protectorate government. The reforms in the land tenure system and power distribution facilitated further transformations in the socio- cultural functions and symbolic value of bark-cloth as discussed in the following paragraphs.

Firstly, the agreement conferred the authority of collecting tax to the British colonial administration although the Kabaka’s position was used to conceal British involvement in the taxation process. Secondly, the agreement put the British colonial administration at liberty to decide the kinds of articles suitable for taxation purposes, and certainly bark-cloth was not one of them. Thirdly, because the Kabaka was to be paid an annual subsidy from the collected revenue, he was not expected to levy additional tax from his subjects. Therefore, the Baganda were no longer obliged to pay the bark-cloth

tax or any other taxes, as was the tradition. Instead, contributions of bark-cloth came in form of *amakula* (royal presents) whenever there was such need at the palace, but not as a mandatory practice.⁸ Paradoxically, it also meant that under the new land tenure system, the Kabaka was no longer in direct control over the bark-cloth economy, since several regions that were most productive in bark-cloth became private property of the local area chiefs. Therefore, the land reforms not only checked the production of bark-cloth intended for the Kabaka, but also influenced the various contexts in which the cultural significance of bark-cloth was originally expressed.

Further, it should not be forgotten that behind the politics of 'Indirect Rule' there was an economic factor aimed at establishing new markets for British products as well as searching for new sources of raw materials for Britain's fast-growing industries. D. A. Low and R.C Pratt identified four distinct types of economic considerations that influenced British colonial policy namely: 1) the desire for achievement of concrete economic gains for specific interest groups; 2) the pursuit of wider economic objectives intended to bring national prestige to the colonizing power; 3) promotion of legitimate commerce and trade in the interest of the local inhabitants (this was initially the ideology of the Western Christian missionaries); and 4) the need to establish a self-sustainable colonial administrative structure (1960:305). Nevertheless, however differently each of the above factors may have influenced the British policy, it is arguable that these colonial relations were primarily influenced by economic motives; therefore, any discussion on the transformation of the bark-cloth of the Baganda during the colonial period must put into consideration the overall British colonial policy at the end of the nineteenth-century.

⁸ Focus group discussions with bark-cloth makers in Buddu County, June 2002.

and the dawn of the twentieth-century. Moreover, generalizing from a study carried out in Burma and Netherlands India, J.S. Furnivall contends that “where the main economic objective was to obtain tropical produce at low rates, indirect rule would be followed, while direct rule would occur where the colony was chiefly valued as a market for the sale of Western goods” (as cited in Low and Pratt 1960:305-306).

In the case of Buganda, the politics of indirect rule was inevitable because of the peculiarities in the political and economic structures that the British colonial administrators encountered at the time of their arrival in Buganda. At the time of external intervention, Buganda had a self-sufficient pre-capitalist economy, which was heavily dependent on the production and regional supply of bark-cloth. Therefore, it was not going to be an easy task for the British colonial administrators to convince the Baganda to cultivate cash crops that were not going to be of any direct necessity to the native population. Certainly, of all the regions under the British sphere of colonial interest in East Africa, Buganda had the most favourable climatic conditions for the cultivation of cash crops. However, the complexity of the matter was in finding the best strategy to introduce the cash economy to the Baganda. Hence, in order to circumvent this constraint, a hut tax system was introduced. In the next section, I analyse the implications of this “new” hut-taxation system on the bark-cloth industry of the Baganda. As I argue, the hut tax system was by no means designed to support the sustainability of local industries, but it was intended to induce the native population to adapt to British colonial policy.

5.5 The Hut Tax System: a Threat to Bark-Cloth?

Under article 12 of the [B]uganda Agreement of 1900, a hut tax was to be levied on any building used as a dwelling place, and within a week of the signing of the Agreement, this new taxation system was launched. The hut tax was payable in three ways. First, payment was by cash; each family was required to pay 3 Rupees. At the time of British colonial intervention, cowry-shells formed the basic monetary unit in Buganda, having been introduced in the country through trade links with the coastal Swahili-Arab traders. However, at the turn of the century, the Indian Rupee, a currency, which was already in use elsewhere in the British East African territory, was introduced in Buganda at a rate of 800 cowry-shells to one Rupee.⁹ As has been revealed through the archival materials relating to the colonial period, in the first few years, payment of hut-tax in cash proved extremely difficult since the amount of rupees in circulation, by the beginning of the twentieth century was still very minimal. In fact, G.D. Smith of the Accounts Department acknowledged this difficulty in his report of March 1901 that “Every effort was made to obtain Rupees instead of Shells, but it was found impossible to obtain all the Taxes in cash, owing in a great measure to the limited amount of Rupees in circulation”.¹⁰ While every effort was being made by the Protectorate administrators to gain the much-needed financial resources, the payment of hut-tax in cash was not going to be a favourable option for the peasant population. The search for the limited Rupees in circulation prompted serious inflation that placed the exchange rate of the Indian currency at 1,000 cowries to one Rupee. By the end of 1901, hut-tax payment in form of

⁹ For details see Letter to Her Majesty's Deputy Commissioner of March 27th 1901.

¹⁰ *ibid.*

cowry currency was stopped; the cowry-shell was eventually demonetized and the Rupee became the official currency of the Protectorate.

The second option of paying hut tax was in form of selected articles considered to be of value to the Protectorate administration. A comprehensive list of these items was circulated to the various collection centres. The acceptable items included among others ivory, hides, skins, foodstuff, and a variety of African wild animals like young zebras, wild pigs, hippos and elephants (Ehrlich 1962a: 25). Fixed rates were set for the items. “Thirty lb. of Indian corn, for instance, would count for Rs. 1; similarly 8 lb. of onions; whilst a bull or bullock would count for Rs. 24, or a cheetah skin for Rs. 3” (Low 1960:98). Low further mentions that by the middle of the year 1900, “young zebras, alive and in good condition counted for Rs. 60; young zebras, partially trained and easy to deal with, were valued at Rs. 90; wild pigs in good condition, at Rs. 3; young elephants in good condition at Rs. 3,000 while young hippopotamuses in good condition counted for Rs.300” (ibid: 99).

Surprisingly, bark-cloth was not included among the acceptable articles in lieu of hut tax yet it had a substantial market-demand both locally and regionally. This exclusion raises a number of questions that warrant a scholarly debate. If bark-cloth production was a major technological activity of the Baganda people, why didn't the Protectorate government consider bark-cloth worth as payment for hut-tax? How then did the Baganda people meet their hut-tax obligations? To what extent was the hut-tax system a contributing factor to the transformation of the symbolic value of bark-cloth? What were the overall implications of government hut tax policy on the bark-cloth industry?

A discussion of the above questions is grounded in the philosophy behind the colonization of Africa, discussed in the previous chapter. Apart from combating the slave trade and keeping peace in the region, the metropolitan states, supported by the Western missionaries, had a bigger objective of finding raw materials for their fast growing industries, as well as extending the market for European mass-produced items as far as Africa. It is, therefore, not surprising that the Protectorate Government tactfully and cautiously selected as worthy of hut tax, only those items and products that were of potential use for the Western market. Further, because the textile industry was one of the fastest growing industries in Europe, it was urgent and necessary for the Protectorate Administration to secure a market outlet in Buganda for British textiles. Hence, it was certainly not possible that Her Britannic Majesty's Protectorate Government could promote such competitive products of indigenous technology, as bark-cloth. I have made reference only to bark-cloth, which is the main focus of this research but it is worth noting that indeed none of the indigenous artefacts in Buganda, as elsewhere in the Protectorate, was made payable in lieu of hut tax. Whereas in the pre-colonial period different articles were collected as tax for the benefit of the community, and specifically for the sustainability of the extensive population at the royal capital, under the colonial administration, the aim was to collect items that could fetch money at the international market.

However, the exclusion of bark-cloth from the hut tax list did not result in total demise of the industry. Instead, the Baganda bark-cloth makers had to exchange their products with other societies, in order to attain items acceptable in lieu of hut-tax. In fact, it was during this period that inter-regional trade of bark-cloth was intensified between

the Baganda and the neighbouring kingdom of Ankole where bark-cloth was highly prized. Elly Tumwine states that “The introduction of back [*sic*] cloth, ebitooma [in Ankole], came with the Baganda ... who brought them to the kings [king`s] palace in search of favour...They were liked as they were lighter than the cow skins [and soon] back [*sic*] cloth trade was spread in the whole country”(1977: 66). As can be argued, the production and supply of bark-cloth was no longer contingent on the patronage of the Buganda monarch, but rather on the clientele of the wealthy communities in the neighbouring societies. Because of their wealth in cattle, the Bahima of the kingdom of Ankole bartered cattle and dairy products with the Baganda in exchange for bark-cloth. The Bahima are a highly decorative society; therefore their taste for intricate patterns was partly responsible for the revival of patterned bark-cloth that became an important trade item in Ankole. The patterned bark-cloths were required for partitioning and interior decoration of the Hima huts. Plate 5.1 shows the interior of a Hima hut; and at the extreme right of the interior is a patterned bark-cloth curtain, whose details are similar to another bark-cloth (plate 5.2), housed in the British Museum.

Whereas in the mid-nineteenth century, patterned bark-cloth was a symbol of royal status in Buganda, at the turn of the twentieth century, it carried an economic value and any person with sufficient funds could have patterned bark-cloth made on order.



Plate 5.1 Inside a Hima hut.
In the Archives of the Margaret Trowell School of Industrial and Fine Arts, Department of Art History.



Plate 5.2 Detail of bark-cloth similar to the bark-cloth curtain in 5.1 above. 251cm x 202cm.
Collection of the British Museum, London. Photo by the author

By reviewing the pictorial information relating to the patterned bark-cloth collected in Buganda by the Church Missionary society during the first half of the twentieth-century it is possible to decipher change in the design of patterned bark-cloth. The star, which is an important cosmological symbol in the art traditions of the Bahima, became a dominant motif as in plate 5.3.

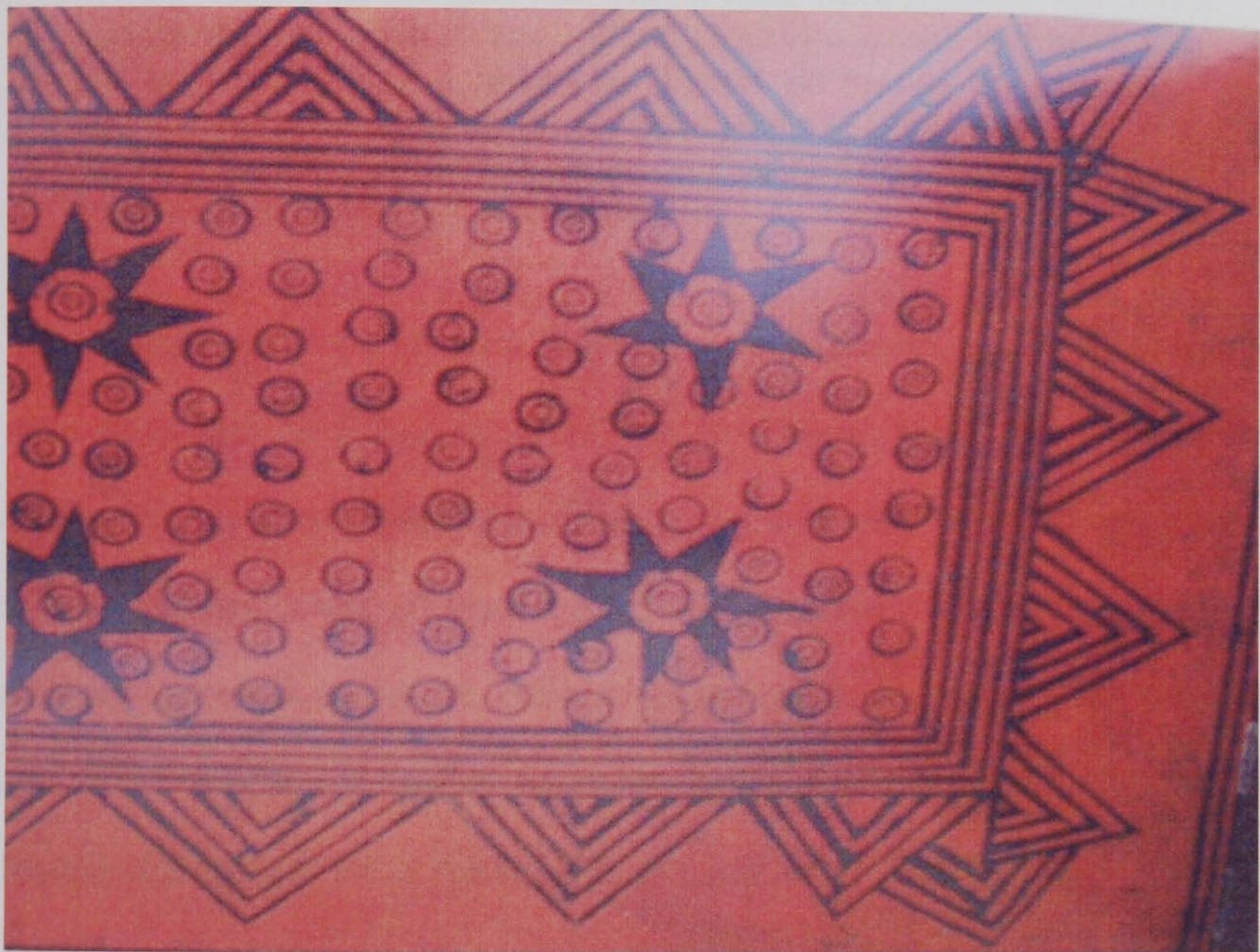


Plate 5.3 Bark-cloth embellished in a star pattern, a familiar cosmological symbol of the Bahima
225cm x 162.5cm. Collection of the British Museum, Photo by the author

Therefore, it becomes evident that while transformations in the production and patronage of bark-cloth in Buganda were a result of external non-African influence, socio-economic factors that prompted the Baganda to respond to market demands influenced the design motifs. Moreover, G. W. Kyeyune reminds us that “It is important to remember that while changes introduced from outside are the easiest to see, it does not

mean that changes cannot also be internally motivated” (2003: 23). By introducing elements of the Bahima culture in bark-cloth design, the Baganda bark-cloth traders resonated with the contemporary theories of tourist art, by which the artist tends to project or respond to the wants (though not necessarily) the needs of the tourist. As Jules-Rosette Benetta, a tourist art theorist has observed:

...tourist art is both an object with market value and a symbolic unit. It is a medium through which diverse cultures come into contact with each other and are transmitted and preserved...Tourist art mirrors the consumers’ expectations and reveals the artists’ perceptions of what consumers want. Thus, the artist and the tourist create equally contrived meanings for commonplace objects and events (1984:23).

However, while the Baganda bark-cloth traders travelled to Ankole for purposes of trade rather than for leisure (as is the case for tourists), their exposure to the Hima traditions, became an influential factor in the transformation of the design process of bark-cloth. Drawing on the rich visual culture of the Bahima, the Baganda re-invented the tradition of bark-cloth decoration. Whereas originally patterned bark-cloth was a status symbol of the members of the Baganda royal domain, it (patterned bark-cloth) was soon to become a status symbol of the Bahima, many of whom were members of the ruling class. This evidence therefore throws more light on Tumwiine’s statement that “Initially, bark-cloth could only be found in the palace and homes of some great chiefs” (1977:66). These, as has been discussed above, were also the chief patrons of the patterned type. However, as more traders penetrated the region of Ankole, and as the Bairu (members of the non-ruling class) gained ownership of the cattle¹¹, there was increased demand for

¹¹ Until the twentieth-century after British intervention, there was a general belief among the Banyankore (people of Nkore) that all the cattle in southwestern Uganda belonged to the *Omugabe*, the King of the kingdom of Nkore, and that the Bahima, the pastoral society, were the official guardians of the cattle for the

both plain and patterned bark-cloth from Buganda throughout the region of western Uganda.

Hence, the long-distance trade in bark-cloth became a more profitable business, and an easier means of earning the hut tax fees. As earlier mentioned in this chapter, the value of a bull or bullock had been set at Rs. 24 yet the tax fees was Rs.3 for each hut. Roscoe has noted that cows were considered as the highest form of currency, and that all prices were regulated by the value of the cow (1922: 61). Based on my field findings, caravans of bark-cloth traders from Buganda traversed different regions of the country with several bales of bark-cloth, which they transported by head. Each *mugugu* (bale) contained ten *mitanda* (pieces of bark-cloth), and each porter carried two or three bales (Ssemukasa, interview, July 2002). From the recollections of my informants, based on the stories told by their fathers and grand fathers, the interregional bark-cloth trade extended beyond Ankole to include other regions like Tooro, Kigezi and as far as Rwanda. Ssemukasa, who was in his late eighties, recalled his father's engagement in bark-cloth trade activities at the dawn of the twentieth century. As he mentioned:

My father, who was a bark-cloth maker and trader, used to tell us about the lucrative bark-cloth industry in the Ankole region at the beginning of the twentieth-century. You know, at that time he was actively involved in regional bark-cloth trade, but he told us that the Bahima were willing to trade one bullock for four or five pieces of bark-cloth, and thus, with three bales of bark-cloth, one stood a good chance of returning to Buddu with at least six heads of cattle.

(Nze kitange yali mukomazi ate era nga musuubuzi. Naye yatugambanga nti embugo kyali kya ttunzi nnyo mw'Ankole, bbo webaasuubulira, ekyasa ekyabiri nga kyakatandika. Ate oba emitanda ena oba etaano gyali

Omugabe. However, by the end of the first quarter of the twentieth century, the Bairu, who constituted the agricultural class, had started acquiring cattle and joined the Bahima in the consumption of bark-cloth from Buganda.

gyigula ente ku muyima era ng'oli bwatwala emigugu gye esatu, ngayinza okukomawo e Buddu n'emigongo gy'ente mukaaga) (ibid).

Hence, because of the higher value bark-cloth had acquired, H. Prendergast, an assistant collector of Buddu County proposed to add bark-cloth to the list of articles for hut tax. In his letter to the Sub-Commissioner in Kampala, dated 3rd September 1901, which I quote at length, Prendergast writes:

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your circular no. 21 of August 16th [in relation to articles accepted in lieu of payment of hut tax]. The principle or I may say the only articles of trade manufactured in Buddu are mats and bark cloths. A considerable trade is now carried on between Buddu and Ankole, as many as fifty to sixty traders passes have been issued at this station in one day, the bulk of the applicants proceeding to Ankole with bark cloths as their main article of trade. Such being the case I presume that if bark cloths were taken in payment of hut tax in Buddu and forwarded to Ankole to be disposed of I believe an equivalent in rupees might be obtained.

My suggestion is that an arrangement should be made with an enterprising trader say Alidna Visram to buy the bark cloth here from the administration at the same rate as they have been received.

It might be pointed out to him that he might reasonably expect a good profit and quick return by trading in Ankole with these goods where they are much prized, and further he would hold the complete control of the market in that district, the Baganda that now trade in these goods would cease to do so as could undoubtedly find it less of a burden to pay their taxes in bark cloth than in any other manufacture.

Taking into consideration the fact that the best kind of bark cloths locally known as *Luomsale* [sic] and which I believe are only obtainable in this district are sold at Mbarara at the rate of two to the rupee. I am of opinion that if these were accepted at three to the rupee in payment of hut tax it would then offer reasonable inducements to any firm to take up the contract.

In order to save time I spoke to Alidna Visram's agent here on the subject and have asked him to find out from his agent at Mbarara at what price the firm would be willing to make such a contract... (1901-1902).

Details of Prendergast's letter had two important implications: first, to attract government towards supporting indigenous industries like bark-cloth production, by

mediating in the interregional trade between the Baganda producers and the consumers in Ankole. Secondly, by proposing Aldina Vissram as a possible regional agent, it is possible that Prendergast had a more serious intention of sidelining the Baganda from the business they had for so long been involved in. It is also possible that his idea was to reduce the movement of the Baganda people because they were also required in Buganda to provide labour on various projects of the government as will be explained shortly. If the main aim of the Protectorate government was to collect hut tax for the purpose of fulfilling its administrative activities as some scholars have suggested, then by accepting bark-cloth in lieu of hut tax, as Prendergast was suggesting, would have been a profitable venture both for the government and the bark-cloth makers. However, this proposal would mean that by supporting the indigenous industries, the Protectorate administrators, who were also Her Britannic Majesty's representatives would have diverged from the theories of British colonial policy. Hence, based on the Commissioner's advice, a decision was taken against acceptance of bark-cloth in lieu of payment of hut tax, and Prendergast was advised to drop the matter immediately. Comments from F.J. Jackson, the Commissioner read as follows:

After reading the above I humbly venture to suggest that the acceptance of such things as Bark cloth be avoided as far as possible. If Aldina Visram wishes to trade in the articles so much the better; but let him buy direct from the natives. If the Asst. Collector, Buddu, enters on a trading venture of this [not legible] for such articles, the result may be most unsatisfactory. Acting S-Commissioner Uganda Province. Please note marginal notes and instruct Collector Masaka accordingly (1901-1902).

The third and last means of payment of hut tax, which had a great effect on the bark-cloth industry, was in the form of labour. The natives were required to spend at least one month working on different projects of the Protectorate Government including

working on government plantations, construction of roads, public buildings, churches and other infrastructures. In the case where the Protectorate administration provided meals for the natives while they were working on Government projects, they (the natives) were required to work for two months: the first month for their hut-tax, and the second one for their food (Ssemukasa, interview, July 2002). For example, about 4,000 Baganda were taken to the Kenya Colony in 1901 to work on the extension of the railway line, which was constructed for the transportation of produce and other merchandise to and from the coast. Around the same period, many new churches and public buildings were being constructed in all parts of the Protectorate. Thus it became almost a routine for natives to be called upon to participate in the construction of churches, schools and hospitals. In Buddu, which was predominantly a county for Roman Catholic followers, many people worked tirelessly in the construction of churches, schools and hospitals. It is worth noting that in addition to these frequent calls to provide labour, the same people were also pressed with the task of finding money to meet their hut tax obligations, and to work on the plantations as shall be discussed shortly. Hence, having spent a considerable amount of time at the Mission working on the various projects, for which the reward was in form of blessings and medals of the Virgin Mary, and other saints, which certainly did not provide immediate help towards solving their financial constraints, out of despair some of the natives withdrew their services in protest swearing, “Ssi ka midaali”, meaning “to hell with medals of foreign saints”. To the present (2005), one of the steep slopes leading to Bwanda Convent of the Bannabikira Sisters, and Villa Maria Catholic Parish, which is one of the oldest parishes in Buddu, is called Ssi ka Midaali. Local sources allude that it was on this slope that the natives were usually overpowered by the heavy logs of timber

and bricks they carried for the construction of the church at Villa Maria (anonymous interview, June 2002).

These complaints by some of the Baganda peasants turned into a political issue that warranted investigation by the British Sub-Commissioner to Buganda. In his report on a working tour to the counties of Mawokota, Busujju, Ggomba, Kabula, Mawogola, Buwekula, Bugangazzi, and Singo, the Sub-Commissioner observed:

At present there is a good deal of discontent owing to the amount of work they [the Baganda] are called on to do; the produce scheme is looked on by many as an extra taxation. They say they have to work for a month or produce Rs.3 every year for Government; then they have to work for a month or provide Rs.2 for their chiefs; then they have to cultivate a patch of ground for Government, and at all times they are called on to make roads, bridge swamps, build chiefs houses, kisakaties (fences), schools, churches, etc., and they really don't know what is going to happen next...They complain that they are called on so often by the chiefs to leave their plantations and go off else-where to work, that they get no time to attend to their own cultivation.¹²

On the above evidence, it becomes possible to deduce that Government and Mission projects took priority over the indigenous activities of the Baganda including bark-cloth production. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the concept of payment of hut tax, just like the concept of a cash economy, was a new phenomenon in Buganda, which at the beginning, caused a lot of anxiety among the peasant population. Since, apparently no tax exemption was made to those people who were working on Church and Government projects, obtaining money to meet the various tax obligations became a crucial factor. As I argue, these discrepancies inevitably caused serious implications to the bark-cloth industry as well. Despite its absence from the tax-list, the Baganda relied on the bark-

¹² Report on Sub-Commissioner's tour to Mawokota, Busujju etc. dated November 13th 1903, UNA A 8 vol. III.

cloth trade in order to attain their hut and ground tax. However, the bark-cloth industry was to experience a serious setback with the introduction of cash crops, particularly cotton farming that came to be closely associated with British colonial rule.¹³

5.6 Cotton: The Warp and Weft of British Colonialism?

Cotton farming was introduced in Buganda in 1902 after Britain had experienced several waves of shortages in the supply of the raw material for her textile industries. The history of the industrialization of the textile industry is beyond the scope of this research. Nevertheless, a brief summary of the British textile history is necessary since it triggered the expansion of cotton production in Buganda that later became an influential factor in the transformation of the indigenous bark-cloth industry. In 1733, the Lancashire mechanic John Kay revolutionized the weaving industry when he invented a Flying Shuttle by introducing a spring into each side of the handloom shuttle, thus speeding up the weaving process. With improved efficiency weavers used more yarn, and consequently put pressure on spinners to increase their output. In 1764, James Hargreaves invented the Spinning Jenny, which Richard Arkwright linked to waterpower in 1769. In the late 1770s, Samuel Crompton introduced the mule, which provided the means to spin faster and yield stronger but finer yarns. The ability to spin finer yarns by 1779 allowed British textiles to compete effectively with Indian muslins (cotton-woven textiles) that were a popular trade item both locally and internationally. By 1785, Edmund Cartwright

¹³ In addition to cotton, other crops were tried out in Buganda for commercial purposes including among others coffee, groundnuts, chilies and simsim.

had linked mechanical power to weaving, and by the 1820s mechanized looms were a dominant feature in the British textile industry.¹⁴

As a result of the mechanization process, it was not only possible to produce fabrics on a massive scale and more cheaply, but it also meant that there was an increased demand for raw materials, which could only be produced outside Britain due to climatic limitations. Hence, as early as the 1830s, cotton became a central issue to many aspects of British political and economic interests worldwide. Moreover, in 1839, Thomas Buxton, a British evangelist and anti-slavery activist, advocated the development of commercial enterprises, primarily cotton-production as a legitimate alternative to slave trade in Africa. Buxton noted:

I now come to the article which demands the largest share of our attention, viz. cotton; because it requires little capital, yields a steady return, is in vast demand in Europe, and grows naturally in the soil of Africa. ... Africa when delivered from that evil [slave trade] which withers her produce and paralyzes her industry, can be made to supply us with the commodity which we so much need, she in her turn, will be the customer of Europe to the same extent, for the manufactured goods which Europe produces (1967: 332, 335).

However, it was not until the 1860s that plans for the British cotton imperialism were to be sketched out, following the catastrophic “cotton famine” that hit Europe between 1861 and 1865. The ‘cotton famine’ was facilitated by the American Civil War, which culminated in the closure of the southern ports thus blocking the exportation of cotton out of the United States. As a result of the cotton famine, the British textile economy came to a standstill. As Cyril Ehrlich (1962b) reports, about 85 percent of the cotton used in Lancashire mills came from the United States. Thus the interruption in the

¹⁴ http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/time/britain/geo_fly_shuttle.shtml accessed 26/06/2004

cotton supply caused a serious threat to the British textile industry, and many mills faced closure while others were forced to operate at half capacity. To evade the crisis, the British textile industrialists put pressure on the metropolitan government to find alternative sources for the raw materials. Discussions into the possibilities of Britain growing its own cotton in the colonies, instead of relying on American sources, were opened up, but when the political crisis in America was resolved in 1865 and the British industries resumed work at full capacity, the idea was frozen. However, a more definitive step by the British colonial government to undertake cotton production in Africa was to be taken towards the end of the nineteenth century, as a result of a more imminent cotton crisis that broke out. Several factors were responsible for the renewed cotton crisis. The first and most serious cause of the cotton famine was the cotton boll weevil that seriously ravaged the cotton-farms in America, thereby causing a significant cotton-deficit. Secondly, the fast industrialization and expansion of cotton textiles mills in America and Asia was another important factor; the rate of cotton consumption by the industries far exceeded the supply of raw materials.¹⁵ The third factor was the overall increase in the world population especially in America, Asia and Europe that expedited demand for textile products.

It was as a result of this renewed crisis that Benjamin Crapper, chairman of the East African committee of the Oldham Chamber of Commerce, made a speech in which he re-emphasized the danger of Lancashire's reliance on American cotton, and the need for Britain to find alternative sources (Mamdani 1999:45). Hence, a committee was formed to investigate the matter, and through its recommendations, Britain decided to

¹⁵ The number of power looms installed in Britain increased from 463,000 in 1874 to 786,000 in 1912. For details, see <http://www.cottontown.org> accessed 21/04/2005

embark on a serious campaign to grow good quality cotton in various regions of its colonial empire. The recommendations of the committee resulted in the inauguration of the British Cotton Growing Association BCGA, in June 1902, which was responsible for the distribution of suitable cotton seeds throughout the Empire (Ehrlich 1962a: 19). The activities of the BCGA received further impetus when King Edward VII (1901- 1910) emphasized the cotton crisis in his speech stating that:

The insufficiency of the supply of the raw material upon which the great cotton industry of this country depends has inspired me with deep concern. I trust that the efforts which are being made in various parts of my Empire to increase the area under cultivation may be attended with a large measure of success (as quoted in Ehrlich 1962a: 19).

In the next section, I examine the response of the British Protectorate administration towards the King's call for cotton cultivation in the British Empire.

5.6.1 Cotton Cultivation in Buganda

Several factors were responsible for the success of the cotton-cultivation programme in Buganda. Firstly, because of its topography characterized by flat-topped hills and gentle slopes, and the favourable climatic conditions, Buganda was distinctively a suitable region for agriculture, thus cotton cultivation. Secondly, at the time of external contact, the kingdom of Buganda already had an impressively well-organized political administrative structure that made it possible for the dissemination of information as well as the organization of labour. Thirdly, because both the missionaries and the colonial administrators complemented each other in most of their activities in Buganda, the introduction of cotton was not going to be a difficult task. The campaign for cotton

cultivation was thus spearheaded from three frontiers namely: 1) through the missionaries, who worked on the moral perspective of the native converts by preaching values of decency, obedience, and working hard with the hope of getting everlasting rewards in the world to come¹⁶; 2) through the British colonial administrators who emphasized the need for hut tax in the development of the Protectorate; and 3) through the Baganda chiefs who were used by both the British colonial administrators and the missionaries to support and implement the cotton-growing programme.¹⁷

Taking the lead to spread the message of cotton cultivation in Buganda was K. Borup, a lay-CMS missionary of Danish origin and director of the CMS Industrial mission in Buganda, which came to be known as the Uganda Company. In 1903, Borup imported five different types of cottonseed totalling 2 ½ tons, through the British Cotton Growing Association. Using his hegemonic position as a missionary, Borup distributed the cottonseeds among chiefs in various counties who then redistributed the seeds to their subjects, Bulemeezi thereby becoming the pioneer cotton producing County of Buganda (as quoted in Engdahl 1999:52). In the same year, the colonial government also imported 1 ½ tons of three different types of seed from the Khedival Agricultural Society of Egypt, which was distributed for trial cultivation among peasants in all potential and accessible parts of the Protectorate. In Buganda, experimental plantations were set up at the administrative grounds of each *Ssaza* (county) chief under the supervision of a

¹⁶ Even in British history, the church was an active propagandist for state order by indirectly promoting subordination, submission and obedience through subtle and persuasive oratorical manipulations (Musisi 1991:123).

¹⁷ In this thesis, the discussion on cotton relates to the imported species that were brought into the country beginning in the twentieth century. However, it is worth noting that the cotton plant was indigenous to Buganda by the time other species were introduced. The problem was that the indigenous species, which grew wildly, could not yield a long enough staple (fiber length) to compete favourably with the American variety.

Government expert. In addition, the British Protectorate Government set up several cotton seed pilot plantations at Kampala and Entebbe, respectively. After realizing promising results, these experimental farms were expanded, and in 1904, the British Protectorate Government cotton- cultivation scheme was launched.

5.6.2 The Cotton Planting Process

Compared to the traditional crop farming in Buganda, cotton cultivation was a laborious process that required a continuous supply of labour right from planting through harvest. This new and laborious system of farming undoubtedly took many Baganda away from many of their “traditional” activities including bark-cloth manufacture. After clearing the fields, the sowing was normally done during the months of April and May to enable the cotton to be harvested during the dry months of December, January and February. Subsequent cotton sowing was done during the short rains of October and November, for the crop to be harvested in June, July and August. When the seeds germinated, two thirds of the cotton seedlings had to be uprooted in order to leave enough gaps between the plants, and in order to ensure a better yield. Half of the remaining plants had to be eliminated when the plant reached about half a meter in height. It was advisable to hand pick the insects from the plants to reduce chances of damaging the boll. When the cotton matured, the clean white bolls were handpicked out of the pods, and the harvesting was done during the dry season. After the harvest, the whole field was uprooted, the plants burnt down, and the ground was prepared for the next season when a new batch of cottonseeds was distributed by the Uganda Company (as cited in Engdahl 1999: 54).

It is important to point out that the cultivation of cotton coincided with the bark-cloth-harvesting season in Buganda. Hence it was often inevitable that the Baganda peasants were called upon at the chiefs' headquarters to plant cotton, when their bark-cloth trees were due for harvest (focus group discussions with bark-cloth makers in Kakuuto, July, 2002). Moreover, this form of cultivation was in total contrast to the indigenous system of intercropping that allowed easy management of different crops on the farm.

5.6.3 The Administrative Procedures

In order to ensure successful implementation of the cotton project in Buganda, it was found necessary for the colonial administrators to work more closely with the area chiefs. Because of their position as the official representatives of the Kabaka, the chiefs were in position to mobilize their subjects to provide labour on the cotton plantations, and on any other Government projects, as was deemed necessary. But how were they (the chiefs) going to be persuaded to respond to the demands of the Protectorate administration, which in many cases were undermining the traditional values of the Baganda? In addition to the guaranteed freehold land titles, the colonial administration granted power to the local chiefs to levy a ground rent of 2 Rupees from their subjects. The spoils were meant to buy their political support, and to encourage them to promote the policies of the Protectorate Government though at the expense of the pre-capitalist economic system. By so doing, the indigenous industries like bark-cloth manufacture that originally relied on the patronage of the Kabaka and the county chiefs were crippled.

I therefore disagree with Cyril Ehrlich's view that cotton cultivation in Buganda was intended to put Buganda to a right economic footing (1962b: 162). I argue that the promotion of cotton in Buganda, as in the rest of the Uganda Protectorate, was part of an imperial policy that aimed at promoting the colonial interests, but not necessarily those of the colonized societies. Whereas bark-cloth production had been the biggest source of domestic income for the kingdom of Buganda prior to external intervention, and whereas the Swahili-Arab trade may have contributed to the transformation of the Baganda bark-cloth industry, it was not until the British demand for cotton revolutionized the agro-economy of the Baganda, that the rapid demise in the production and patronage of bark-cloth was realized.

In 1904, The Uganda Company installed a power-driven cotton ginnery in Kampala and employed agents to purchase cotton from those chiefs to whom the cotton seeds had been distributed. Meanwhile, the Protectorate government distributed Hand-gins to the chiefs at a cost of £ 1 each, to facilitate in the deseeding of cotton en site. It was considered necessary for the ginning process to be carried out at or close to the place of cultivation in order to reduce the weight of the cotton, for purposes of easy transportation, since head-porterage was the only means of transportation in Buganda by the beginning of the twentieth century.

Because of the many difficulties associated with cotton cultivation, the number of Baganda peasants, who paid their hut tax in form of labour dwindled significantly, as most of them found it more profitable to engage in alternative activities, in order to raise the required hut tax. It cannot be emphasized enough that domestic and regional trade in bark-cloth became one of the most popular means for the Baganda to meet their taxation

obligations. The slow response towards cotton farming caused an imminent threat to the economic prospects of the British Protectorate, which was progressively extended to cover other regions that constitute the present boundaries of Uganda. During the financial year 1905/6, only 241 bales of cotton valued at £1,089 were exported (Nabudere 1980:40). Hence, in order to circumvent this shortage, the British Protectorate Government exerted more pressure on the area chiefs to ensure that the cotton programme would not fail. Some chiefs were even threatened with losing their positions [and the associated benefits] should they fail to perform their duties diligently.

In 1908, the Uganda Cotton Ordinance was enacted giving the British Protectorate Government full powers over the growing and marketing of cotton throughout the Protectorate. During the same year, the colonial administration increased the volume of cottonseeds imported into the country to 35 tons, as compared to 1 ½ tons imported in 1904 (Morgan 1909). In addition, the peasants were prompted to grow cotton on their individual plots, in a bid to make cotton more popular, and to increase the output. According to Tornjörn Engdahl, peasants were instructed to grow at least a quarter of an acre, while the chiefs were instructed to cultivate between a half and 1½ acres of cotton (1999:61). In addition, Government experts were posted to various regions of the Protectorate to ensure that proper procedures of cultivation were being followed. So, it happened that at the annual meeting of the British Cotton Growing Association of 1908, Uganda was described as “the only bright spot in the Empire...owing to the fact that the crop from the West coast of Africa and elsewhere proved more or less a failure, owing chiefly to unfavourable climatic conditions” (ibid: 2).

By the end of the first decade, cotton cultivation had become part of the compulsory exercise popularly referred to by the Baganda as *akasanvu* (mandatory labour). The *akasanvu* system was introduced in 1909 by Governor Hesketh Bell in order to secure an unrestricted supply of labour for government projects. Under this system, every physically able person was obliged to provide labour towards cultivation of cotton on government plantations, for purposes of transportation of produce and supplies,¹⁸ and for the maintenance of public roads for a period of one month per year. This labour provision was in addition to the hut tax, and the poll tax. In addition, the natives were also expected to maintain their own cotton farms. Through this coercive approach, the cotton acreage increased as well as the harvest. At the end of the financial year 1910/11, a total of 13,378 bales of cotton valued at £165,412 were exported, a third of which was grown in the Buganda Province (Wrigley, as quoted in Nabudere 1980: 40).¹⁹ While labour provision under the *akasanvu* system was not free (people were paid according to a rate fixed by the government), the system was seriously resented because it carried people away from their homes for a long time. A considerable number of the people who were engaged in these forced labour activities were professionals in their own right as bark-cloth makers or potters, whose contribution to the community was highly compromised by the British colonial policies.

Buganda was not an isolated case; similar treatment was reported from other regions in Africa where colonial cotton was grown. As Isaacman and Roberts argue, colonial cotton promotion throughout the continent was based on a mistaken assumption

¹⁸ Because head portorage was the only method of transport, a substantial number of people were required at any one time to transport supplies on behalf of the Protectorate administration.

¹⁹ See also Forrt and Hougham (1973:24).

that there was a massive stock of underutilized labour in Africa that could be drawn into cotton production. Colonial cotton promoters throughout the continent ignored the heavy labour demands of local agrarian systems, the interplay of different crops and seasonal tasks, and the ways in which adding or expanding production of a cash crop (particularly one that was both inedible and labour-intensive such as cotton) could cause real hardships (1999:22-23). Further, whether by design or error, the concept of “work” was defined in very narrow terms that excluded any other kind of activity that was not deemed to be in the capitalist interest. Hence, such activities indigenous to Buganda like bark-cloth manufacture, house construction and reed fencing, drum making, pottery, canoe building, cultivation of food crops, beer brewing, and hunting were considered extraneous.

5.7 Effects of the First World War (1914 -18) on the Bark-cloth Industry

The First World War (1914 -1918) that spilled over to East Africa caused a serious setback to the bark-cloth industry of the Baganda. Because of the possible security threat to British interests, the Protectorate Government decided in early 1915 to tighten security along its southern borders with German East Africa. Hence, several military camps were set up in various areas of the two border counties of Buddu and Kooki. As a result, well over 115, 800 bark-cloth trees were cut down by the military forces for military camp construction purposes, and the creation of passages for telegraph lines; which culminated in the emigration of many people (undoubtedly many of them with profound bark-cloth production skills) to other regions.²⁰ Official statistics compiled by Captain J. E.

²⁰ Telegram, J. E. Philipps to the Chief Secretary dated October 24th 1916, UNA A46/1512; Letter, J.E. Philipps to the Chief Secretary dated March 8th 1917, UNA A46/1512; Letter, Chief Secretary to the Government, to the Deputy Adjutant and Quarter Master-General dated March 26th 1917, UNA A46/1512.

Philipps indicate that 8,392 bark-cloth trees were cut down in Kooki County while 107,435 were felled in Buddu.²¹ However, he further indicated in his communication that the figures first supplied by the Ggombolola (sub-county) councils were checked by “independent political agents”, and subsequently reduced.

Earlier on in this chapter, it was pointed out that during the pre-colonial period, each family reserved about twenty bark-cloth trees for royal usage while others were for the area chief, for trade, and for family purposes. It is possible to deduce from the above evidence that the issue of compensation influenced the statistical figures submitted by the sub-county chiefs, and the final figures arrived at by Captain Philipps in two respects: on the one hand, in the hope of gaining a fair amount of compensation for their felled bark-cloth trees, the Baganda could have made inflated claims; but on the other hand, it is possible that the fear to drain the account of the Protectorate government, especially at the time of political uncertainty, could have compelled Philipps to make deliberate “independent” deductions. While the natives who remained behind received compensation for their felled bark-cloth trees three years later, and moreover after a painful process, the damage that was caused to the bark-cloth industry was irreversible.

5.8 Conclusion

In this chapter it has been made clear that during the early twentieth-century, the British colonial policy in Buganda as elsewhere in Africa was geared at promoting the growth of raw materials for the fast growing industries in Europe. Attention was paid towards introduction of cash crops into the region at the expense of the indigenous industries like bark-cloth production. With the changes in the administrative structure of

²¹ Letter, J. E. Philipps to Chief Secretary of the Government dated January 21st 1917, UNA A46/1512.

Buganda, the subsequent land reforms, the removal of the royal taxes, the labour demands for cultivation of cash crops, and the massive felling of bark-cloth trees in Buddu during the First World War, the bark-cloth industry of the Baganda came to a near demise. Though heavily diminished, the bark-cloth industry was never scrapped completely mainly because of the cultural value of bark-cloth within the Baganda society, and its economic value in the neighbouring regions like Ankole where it commanded a significantly high price. In that context, the patronage of bark-cloth by the wealthy Hima society prompted a revival of the practice of bark-cloth decoration that had almost been forgotten in Buganda although this bark-cloth boom was to be short lived as imported fabrics progressively became more available throughout the Protectorate. In the next chapter, I focus on the various changes in colonial economic policy and their implications on the bark-cloth industry of the Baganda. As I argue, although these changes rejuvenated the planting of bark-cloth trees, it comes to light that the bark-cloth industry did not get back on its former economic footing, as to a great extent, the ficus trees planted in Buganda during the interwar period and thereafter, served a totally different purpose rather than the manufacture of bark-cloth.

6 THE BARK-CLOTH INDUSTRY DURING THE INTERWAR/POST SECOND WORLD WAR

6.1 Introduction

During the two decades of the interwar period (1919-1939), and the two decades that followed, several events occurred that became influential in the mutation of the symbolic interpretation of bark-cloth as well as the general cultural terrain of the kingdom of Buganda. Most importantly, was the change in the pattern of agriculture, following the economic depression that hit the West after the First World War. A general decline in plantation (large-scale) agriculture and a subsequent rise of subsistence farming, with attention focused on the cultivation of cotton (and later on coffee), and the resultant migration of people from other regions in search of work, were some of the key events of this period. I analyse how this set of events paved the way for major transformations in the socio-economic and political structures in the Uganda Protectorate beginning in the 1920s.

In the first part of the chapter, I review the political and economic episodes of the interwar-period and their implication on the bark-cloth industry of the Baganda. As I demonstrate, while this period marked the demise of intra-regional bark-cloth trade, it also paved the way for yet a new chapter in the evolution of the symbolic value of bark-cloth of the Baganda. In the second part, I focus on the transformations in the socio-economic affairs of Buganda during the Second World War (1939-45) with a specific aim of establishing how they in turn dislodged the meaning associated with bark-cloth. The rise in the cotton and coffee prices on the international market after World War II

provided the impetus for further expansion of subsistence cash crop farming in Buganda, and thus prompted a new wave of planting bark-cloth trees in order to provide a shed for the hygrophilous coffee trees. I examine whether the renewal of bark-cloth-tree-planting helped to resuscitate the bark-cloth industry in Buganda.

In the third and last section, I take a look at the twist of events in Buganda during the post-war period, from a socio-economic, to a political perspective. Of importance to the present study were the 1945, and 1949 riots, during which the Baganda expressed discontent about the political and economic imbalances, propagated by the colonial administrators, and the 1953-55 crisis that resulted in the deposition of the Kabaka of Buganda by the Protectorate administration. I examine the extent to which politics became an influential factor in the transformation of the design and symbolic functions of bark-cloth of the Baganda especially during the mid-twentieth century.

6.2 The Bark-cloth Industry during the Interwar Period (1920s to 1938)

The impact of the economic depression that hit the West after the First World War was felt in the Uganda Protectorate during the 1930s. Almost all nations sought to protect their domestic production by imposing tariffs, raising existing ones, and setting quotas on foreign imports. The effect of these restrictive measures was to greatly reduce the volume of international trade. By 1932, the total value of world trade had fallen by more than half as country after country took measures against the importation of foreign goods.¹ The general decline of the commodity prices, and the overall increase in overhead costs had significant effects on plantation agriculture, which had been the main focus of the Protectorate Government. Amidst this economic crisis, the Protectorate Government took

¹ <http://www.english.uiuc.edu/maps/depression/about.html> accessed 18/02/2004

a radical decision to change its economic policy and place more emphasis on a subsistence form of agriculture, but focusing on the cultivation of cash crops, especially cotton, which was still in demand in Europe. As Christopher C. Wrigley, an agricultural historian on Buganda rightly analysed, “[because] for the majority of [the peasant farmers] the money costs of production were virtually nil[,] there could be no question of “profits” being converted into “losses” by deterioration in the market situation [because the] [f]alling price could not possibly drive the cotton-growers and the coffee-growers out of business” (1970: 61-62). Hence, by switching to subsistence agriculture, the Protectorate Government was assured of sustaining the economy, which at the time, was still in its infancy. The change in the agricultural policy, therefore, forced several estates (largely owned by Europeans) to close down and a few others were sold off to the Indians, who, under the 1900 Agreement, had been debarred from buying land in Buganda. As I discuss in the next few paragraphs, this change in the agricultural policy paved the way for a cash crop economy that surpassed and overshadowed the bark-cloth industry.

6.2.1 Genesis of Subsistence Cash Crop Farming: End of the Bark-Cloth Industry?

In order to set the subsistence agricultural economy on course, the Protectorate Government devised new measures that would entice peasants to embrace the cultivation of cash crops at their own free will. To begin with, in 1921, the Protectorate Government decisively withdrew its policy on mandatory labour, popularly known as *akasanvu*, which had been imposed since 1909, by Governor Hesketh Bell, on every peasant in a sound physical condition. Wrigley asserts that “in relaxing its economic pressure at this time,

the Government was moved in part by the belief that coercive measures, besides being undesirable had ceased to be necessary” (1970:47) However, I argue that the *kasavu* policy had simply been found to be counterproductive especially in Buganda where it was highly resented.

J. M. Fortt and D. A. Hougham, other economic-historians on Buganda, furnish us with the necessary evidence pointing to a fluctuation in the cultivation of cotton in Buganda during the first two decades of the twentieth-century. They observe that, “by 1919, only 30 per cent of the cotton exported by [the] Uganda [Protectorate] was grown in Buganda” (1973:24) despite the fact that Buganda was the pioneer province to engage in the cultivation of cotton and other cash crops, and above all, it was the most favoured region climatically. Yet, statistics of cotton production during the period after the abolition of *akasanvu* indicate a dramatic increase in the acreage under cotton production in Buganda to 192,000 acres in 1924/25 compared to 47,000 acres of cotton in 1919/1920 (Wrigley 1970:47). With the abolition of *akasanvu*, and as more Baganda took on the cultivation of cash crops in a bid to raise money to meet the various taxes, it became increasingly difficult for the Protectorate Government to find adequate labour supply within Buganda. Hence, in 1923, the Protectorate Government set a labour policy which legalized and facilitated the migration of people from other regions of the Protectorate and beyond, into Buganda, which at that time, was the agricultural base and centre for the Protectorate administration.

The labour policy initially attracted immigrants mainly from western and north-western Uganda although by the end of the second decade, immigrant workers came from as far as Rwanda and Burundi. A large number of these labourers who came to work on

the Government projects soon found their way into the Baganda villages where they participated in the cultivation of cotton (and other cash crops) either as *abapakasi* (seasonal immigrant labourers) or *abapangisa* (rented a piece of land and agreed to share the crops with the landowners) while others settled in Buganda as tenants (*abasenze*). Both the *abapakasi* and *abapangisa* not only supplemented the agricultural activities of the Baganda, but more often, they substituted the family labour in the cultivation of cash crops. The latter group was subjected to pay *obusuulu* (ground rent) and *envujjo* (a portion of their produce for each harvest, and on technological products like bark-cloth and local brew) to the landowners, almost in a way akin to the customary relationship of production and supply of labour that existed between the Kabaka and his representatives, and the general populace.²

Hence, with the rise of subsistence cash crop farming in Buganda, the landowners began, in 1920, to exact *envujjo* on the cotton grown by their tenants amounting to 25 lb or its money equivalent, for every plot larger than a quarter of an acre (Fortt & Hougham 1973: 25). It was at this stage that the colonial administrators realized the need to regularize the system of exacting *envujjo* as it became apparent that the landowners were actually on their way to becoming an “exceedingly” rich class that apparently would not be controllable in the long run. In order to overcome this major shortcoming, the Protectorate Government set up guidelines governing the public on the payment of *envujjo* and *obusuulu*, which were made legally binding under the *Busuulu* and *Envujjo* Law that became effective in 1928. Under this law, the amount of *busuulu*

² It should be recalled that by virtue of the [B]uganda Agreement of 1900, many people in Buganda were transformed into a tenant society after their clan land had been parceled out by the colonial administration to the chiefs, who henceforth, became their landlords. Under their new status, the peasants were obliged to offer *envujjo* to the landowners. See section 5.2 of the previous chapter.

payable to the landlords by each tenant for any cultivated plot not exceeding three acres was fixed at ten shillings a year. In addition, the *envujjo* levied on cotton or any other cash crop was set at a fixed rate of four shillings for an acre, up to three acres, beyond which a tenant had to come into a special agreement with his landlord as regards the additional fee. Further, tribute on indigenous products like banana beer and bark-cloths was limited to four shillings. Lastly and most importantly, this law prohibited the landowners from evicting their tenants as long as they continued to cultivate their *bibanja* (plots).

Because it provided security and stability to the peasant community, the *Busuulu* and *Envujjo* Law caused a major influx from the neighbouring regions, attracting immigrants from as far as Rwanda and Burundi into Buganda in search of land and work. A report of the Committee of Enquiry into the Labour situation in the Uganda Protectorate of 1938 estimated that “of the 114,000 male immigrants believed to be employed in Buganda, 79.3 per cent were working in the Ganda villages, 19.3 per cent, being seasonal tenants or labourers, 35.5 per cent jobbing labourers and 24.5 per cent settled on their own plots” (as cited in Fortt and Hougham 1973: 26).

As I argue, the migrant labour allowed the Baganda more time and opportunity to venture into other income-generating activities that unfolded with the genesis of urbanization. Most importantly to the present study, the flow of immigrants into Buganda was an influential factor in the revival of the bark-cloth industry during the 1920s and 1930s as they formed part of the lucrative market for bark-cloth. Whereas, during the first decade of the twentieth-century, bark-cloth makers travelled to distant places like the western region of Ankole to sell their fabrics, in the two decades that followed, many

found it equally profitable to trade locally as there was a ready market for their fabrics. Several *bakomazi* and other elders interviewed attested to this thriving bark-cloth trade.

For example, Omulangira George William Kansere explained to me how the immigrant population helped to boost the bark-cloth industry during the second and third decade of the twentieth-century. Kansere stated:

I would say that almost all immigrant workers who came to Buganda during the 1920s and 1930s were potential buyers of bark-cloth because very few people at that time could afford to buy woven fabrics; except a few who had some little money, would buy jute bags, which they wore in a form of a dress by cutting out openings for the neck and the sleeves.

(Kale kangambe nti abagwiira bonna abajja okupakasa mu Buganda mu myaka gy'abiri n'egyasatu twabaguzaanga embugo kubanga tebalina busobozi kugula ngoye. Mpozzi abaalinaanga ku busente nga bagula ekkutiya zebasalangamu ebituli okukola engeri y'ekiteeteeyi) (interview, June 2002)

Even among the ordinary Baganda, bark-cloth continued to serve as a fabric for bedding and daily wear in many families. Expressing this view, Kavuma Sseggirinya shared his own experience, mentioning that:

I remember the first time I ever wore a real cotton fabric was in 1926 when I had gone to visit my uncle who was working with the Uganda Company; a [British] Company that first introduced a ginning factory in the country. I was about seven years of age, and in my home village, we were the only kids wearing woven fabrics.

(Nze nzijukira okusooka okwambala olugoye nnali ngenze wa Kojjange eyali akola mu Uganda Kampuni, yali Kampuni ya Bazungu abasooka okuleeta ekyuma ekisunsula Ppamba. Baakiyitaanga *Ekyuma ekya Boola*. Omwaka ogwo mwe nnasolekera okwambala ku lugoye gwali 1926, nnalina emyaka nga musanvu, era ku kyalo ewaffe nga ffe fekka ffe baana abambala engoye) (interview, December, 2002).

Because many people focused their attention to saving money in order to meet the pressing demands of the time, like paying tax, buying their own *bibanja* (plots) and sending their children to school, buying of exotic commodities like textiles for daily wear remained a distant dream; although, a good number who were close to the missionary quarters had a fair chance of getting a few fabrics for wearing while going to church on Sundays. This I discuss in the next chapter. However, it is worth pointing out that during the 1930s, consumption of bark-cloth transcended social, cultural and racial boundaries, as it also caught the attention of some members of the European community in Uganda. A. D. F Thompson mentions that, Europeans “attracted by its [referring to bark-cloth] rich shades of red brown and its texture [employed] it for panelling, cushions, chair seats, blotters, calendars, and such other things as an imaginative mind may [have] suggest[ed]. They even employ[ed] those on which patterns [were] inscribed ([e]ntone), as wall hangings” (1934:17).

Another interesting development in the agricultural sector during the interwar period that contributed (though indirectly) to the survival of the bark-cloth industry of the Baganda was the commercialization of coffee, a crop that was not entirely new to the Baganda. By the time it was encouraged for commercial purposes, coffee was already serving significant cultural functions among the Baganda society as I proceed to explain in the next few paragraphs.

6.3 The Historical and Cultural Relevance of Coffee in Buganda

Unlike cotton that grew wild in Buganda and served no specific purpose within the Baganda community, coffee was an indigenous crop with a historical cultural

attachment, stretching as far back as the thirteenth or fourteenth-century, when the kingdom of Buganda was established. Oral history alludes that upon arrival in Kyaggwe, Kintu, the founder of the kingdom, was offered roasted coffee beans by the indigenous peoples of the area, as a sign of hospitality. It is further claimed that Kintu was even assigned a specialist called Kafuuma of the *nyonyi* (bird) clan to be in charge of roasting his coffee.³ Thenceforth, sharing of coffee beans became an important cultural gesture among the Baganda, and for that reason, any ceremony that involves the establishment, affirmation or renewal of social relations among people of different family backgrounds is crowned with the sharing of roasted coffee beans.

Historically, coffee beans were used in the ritual of blood-brotherhood (*okutta omukago*), whereby a coffee berry was split, and each of the two parties took one half, which they smeared with their own blood, and gave to one another to eat, thereby establishing a mutual blood bond between them and their families. With modernity, this traditional ritual of *okutta omukago* has been phased out, but the sharing of roasted coffee has been maintained as a recognized social custom of the Baganda. As recently as 2004, sharing coffee beans is still a major part of the *kwanjula* (introduction ceremony), a pre-marriage ceremony of the Baganda. Once the prospective husband meets the approval of the girl's family, the function of sharing roasted coffee beans (also referred to as *okutta omukago*) follows to symbolize the established unity between the two families. The groom-to-be, together with his immediate family are ushered into the family room where they are given coffee beans to chew, and a gourd (these days a glass) of drinking water. Words of assurance about the permanence of the newly established relationship are exchanged between the two families. Originally, this function was always performed

³ For details about the history of the kingdom of Buganda see chapter three.

while the two parties were seated on a piece of bark-cloth; but nowadays, hand-woven mats, which are of equal cultural importance in Buganda, have surpassed the bark-cloth. Therefore because of its symbolic value, the notion of coffee cultivation for economic purposes did not meet any resistance from the Baganda.

Senteza Kajubi (1965) reports that the first systematic efforts to grow coffee for export in Uganda date as far back as 1900 when the British Protectorate government introduced the *Arabica* specie from Nyasaland (present day Malawi) where coffee cultivation was already flourishing. *Arabica* coffee was of a larger bean than *Robusta*, the indigenous specie. The mission stations took the lead in planting coffee for commercial purposes, as part of their industrial activities. Progressively, the Christian converts began to cultivate it in their gardens along with food crops. By 1909, several non-African planters had started exploring the possibilities of cultivating coffee at a large scale, and by the end of 1922, it was estimated that a total of 47,187 acres was under coffee cultivation, out of which 10, 698 acres was privately managed by the Baganda peasants (Kajubi 1965: 139).

Interestingly, the expansion of coffee cultivation rekindled the planting of bark-cloth trees throughout Buganda. In chapter three, it was pointed out that bark-cloth trees have a rare property of increasing the soil humidity in their immediate vicinity, and also provide a good shade for such hygrophilous plants as coffee. This rare quality of the *ficus* species, well known to the Baganda, motivated many people who turned to coffee farming, to plant more bark-cloth trees in their gardens in order to boost the yields. These were soon to become useful sources of bark-cloth during the late 1920s and throughout the 1930s when the bark-cloth trade was rejuvenated by the labour migrations into Buganda.

However, the bark-cloth industry of the Baganda faced yet again another setback beginning in the 1940s because of the Second World War, as I discuss in the next section.

6.4 The Second World War (1939-1945)

The outbreak of World War II in 1939 was a turning point in global socio-economic, political, and cultural history.⁴ A comprehensive history of World War II has been well-documented by numerous scholars including among others, John L. Snell (1962); Martha B. Hoyle (1970); A. Calder (1992); Gerhard L. Weinberg (1994); Morris Beckman (1996); and Mark Donnelly (1999). I will only highlight therefore those issues that are pertinent to the present discussion on the impact of the war on the socio-economic conditions in the Uganda Protectorate, and the resultant impact on the bark-cloth industry of the Baganda. In February 1939, the Protectorate Government took steps to prepare for an emergency in view of the imminent war. A National Service Committee was set up to register all persons (African, Asian and Europeans), who were willing to volunteer in the national service. In Buganda, mobilization of the indigenous community came from the Kabaka. As had always been the case, the Baganda responded swiftly to

⁴ Since the end of the First World War, Germany had never come to terms with the territorial losses it encountered. Therefore, when Adolf Hitler's National Socialist Party came to power in 1933, there was a renewed impetus in Germany to attempt to overturn the Versailles settlement of 1919 and to recover its lost territories. Germany was not the only disgruntled colonial power; Italy, under the rule of the fascist dictator Benito Mussolini since 1922, also had a strong desire to realize her territorial ambitions but simply lacked the resources to make the move in isolation. Hence they sought to join the militarily powerful Germany in challenging Britain and France, the two main controllers in the Mediterranean region. Outside Europe, Japan, which was another major power, was an established subscriber to the policy of territorial expansion as she was at the time, already occupying a considerable part of the Chinese territory. When Britain challenged Germany's foreign policy, and particularly in relation to her attack on Poland, the trio joined in the battle in the interest of their own foreign policies, thereby resulting in a prolonged war that eventually turned out to be a Second World War. As was the case with the First World War, the political crisis in the West, was soon to spill over to the rest of the world thus sucking colonized and Protectorate states into the conflict. The Uganda Protectorate was not an exception.

the Kabaka's call, and soon many ordinary Baganda, and the *bakungu* (senior administrative chiefs) volunteered for military or other service, locally and abroad.

In 1940 Germany made severe attacks on the West across the frontiers of the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg, which led to the surrender of the Netherlands on May 14, and that of Belgium on May 27. Further, on June 10, Benito Mussolini, a fascist dictator, led Italy into war against Britain and France. The latter conceded defeat and signed an armistice with Germany and Italy on June 22. By September, Italy had made ferocious attacks on the British forces in Egypt. Hence the possibility of an attack on British East African territories by the Italian army, via the northern frontier, became imminent. As Kenneth Ingham explains, the British colonial administrators were also wary that given the surrender of Belgium to Germany, it was almost a certainty that Congo, a neighbouring territory at the western side, which was under the control of Belgians, was going to become a route for the Germany enemy into the British East African territory (1958: 213).

More worries for British East African territories came from Japan's decision to join the war in December 1940, which made the route via the Indian Ocean a dangerous one as far as the security of the East African coast was concerned. Hence, it was urgent and crucial for the British Colonial administration in the East African region to raise as many men as they could possibly get to defend the region from the enemy. Thus, on 18th May 1941, the Uganda Protectorate administration passed an Ordinance providing for compulsory military or service in a related capacity, for all male British subjects or British protected persons between the ages of 18 and 45. A further Ordinance passed on the same day empowered the Governor to raise a local military force for the defence and

internal security of the Protectorate. More than a Division of King's African Rifles⁵ was sent to Burma where the *askaris* (African soldiers) won distinction in the perils of jungle warfare (Ingham 1958: 213- 217). A good number of these were Baganda.

Though it is not possible to quantify the number of Baganda men who joined voluntary service, let alone the statistics of those who were engaged in bark-cloth production at the time World War II broke out, we can speculate that the war caused considerable disruption to the bark-cloth industry and other socio-economic sectors in Buganda. For example, during my interview with Bernadod Kizito, a bark-cloth maker and *kawonawo* (World War II veteran) of Kitokolo village in Bukulula Sub-County of Buddu County, who participated in the war in Burma, he recalled that most of his contemporaries apart from those who had physical ailments, volunteered for military service. As he explained: "Whereas we did not know why we were going to war to fight the Germans, we felt that it was our duty to respond to the call of the Kabaka. After all, when Kabaka makes an order, an ordinary person has no choice but to respond unquestioningly, that you know very well" ("wewaawo twagenda mu lutalo, abasinga obungi tetwamanya lwaki twali tugenda okulwanyisa omuzungu. Naye kubanga Kabaka yali alagidde, twalina okusitukiramu ku lwa Kabaka waffe. Anti naawe okimanyi nti Omutanda bwaba alagidde, ffena tulina okusitukiramu.") (interview, May, 2002). The point to be noted here is that, because all men of a productive age had been called out for war, most of the activities in the Protectorate, including bark-cloth making, almost came to a standstill. But once British and Allied forces secured Eritrea and Ethiopia, and once the safety of the Indian Ocean route had been guaranteed after the defeat of the Japanese

⁵ The King's African Rifles was an armed force of East African dependencies comprising of Uganda, Kenya, Somaliland, and British Central Africa.

forces, East Africa ceased to be in danger, and the *kawonawos* (combatants), though literary meaning “survivors”, returned to their normal activities.

6.5 Political, Economic and Cultural Situation in Buganda during the 1940s

The 1940s was a period of political, economic, and cultural turbulence, as far as Buganda was concerned. Between 1939 and 1945, several distinctive events happened in Buganda following the death of Sir Daudi Chwa II, the Kabaka of Buganda on November 22 1939, and the accession of Edward Frederick William David Walugembe Mutebi Luwangula Muteesa II to the throne. Firstly, was the re-marriage of Drusila Namaganda, the *Nnamasole*; secondly, was the persistent economic depression, which occurred as a result of the First World War which impaired economic transactions worldwide; and thirdly, was the decision by the Protectorate Government to cutback on the prices of cotton and coffee paid to the growers, the majority of whom were based in Buganda. Though seemingly unrelated, the above occurrences indirectly contributed to the transformation of the cultural fabric of Buganda as they paved the way for further transformations in the symbolic interpretation of bark-cloth. I will begin the discussion with the cultural matters.

In 1941, two years after the death of Kabaka Daudi Chwa II, and the accession of Kabaka Edward Muteesa II to the royal throne, Drusila Namaganda, the *Nnamasole* declared her intentions to remarry. According to Buganda royal customs, *Nnamasole* is not supposed to remarry once the Kabaka has ceased to live in a mortal state. But worse still, the *Nnamasole* had chosen to marry a *mukopi* (commoner). Hence, *Nnamasole*'s

decision to marry Petero Simioni Wakiwugulu Kigozi stirred a lot of criticism among the Baganda. Despite the public outcry, the private marriage-ceremony went ahead as scheduled, with the support of the Anglican Church, and a few *bakungu* (administrative chiefs) including Martin Luther Nsibirwa, the then Katikkiro (Prime minister) of Buganda. This event caused a lot of resentment in the hearts of the Baganda conservatives, who regarded the marriage as an encroachment on, and distortion of the royal traditions of their kingdom. There was a general feeling of betrayal by those chiefs who supported the marriage, as well as the missionaries who blessed it. Consequently, many Christians boycotted going to church, some resorted to indigenous religious practices, and only a few showed interest in Government development programmes. As one could imagine, the feeling of animosity between the two parties was crystal-clear. Confronted by such strong opposition, and on the advice of the governor, Nsibirwa stepped down as Katikkiro, and was replaced by Wamala, a relatively insignificant chief⁶. Although this unpopular event was essentially cultural, its implications were of a political and socio-economic nature. The remarriage of the Kabaka's widow was considered among the Baganda to be culturally incorrect because it undermined the authority of the Kabaka, who is the symbolic figure at the centre of the traditions and customs of the Baganda. Even after his death, the Baganda continue to recognize the authority and symbolic importance of the Kabaka, which explains why they opposed outright, *Nnamasole's* remarriage. Yet, according to the Western missionaries, *Nnamasole's* decision to remarry after the death of her husband did not conflict with laws of the Church. As I contend, this cultural conflict re-awakened nationalistic feelings, and

⁶ For more details see Mulira (1950: 23); Musisi (1991: 291-296); Mamdani (1999: 178)

political dissatisfaction which formed a backdrop to the riot of 1945 as I will explain later in this chapter.

On the economic side, the Second World War imposed limitations on the shipping facilities as many Allied ships were reserved for carrying military hardware and personnel, but most importantly, because of fear of attack by enemy submarines.⁷ Because of these limitations, there was a drastic decline in the world cotton and coffee exports. Economic historians, J. M. Fortt and D. A. Houghman inform us that cotton exports from the Uganda Protectorate fell from a staggering 400,000 bales in 1937-8 to only 123,000 bales in 1942-3. Likewise during the same year, coffee exports declined from 20,000 tons to only 12,000 tons (1973: 28). However, the end of the World War in 1945 opened a new economic chapter for the cotton and coffee growing regions. Due to forces of supply and demand, there was a drastic rise in the world prices for cash crops. By 1946, the price of *robusta* coffee popularly grown in Buganda, which had fallen to thirty-two shillings per cwt in 1938, had shot high to fifty-seven shillings per cwt. Similarly, the price of cotton drastically shot up from fifty-five shillings per lb to one hundred-thirty shillings per lb (*ibid*).

As a result, many Baganda peasants once again turned their attention to the cultivation of cash crops as they realized the prospects accruing to commercial agriculture. With the increase in the commodity prices, many more ordinary people could raise enough money to meet their needs including among others: payment of tax, taking their children to school, and above all, in order to buy their own plots. Surplus funds (if

⁷ The Germans sought to exploit the vulnerabilities of the coalition by attacking their ships as they crossed and re-crossed the Atlantic Ocean carrying military equipment and personnel and all the requirements of the British war economy. It is estimated that the Germans built over 1000 submarines, of which some 830 participated in operations at one time or another, during the war period. For more details, see W. J. R. Gardner (1999).

any), were then used for purchasing articles of foreign manufacture like textiles and garments that were originally only affordable by the chiefs and a few wealthy people in Buganda. Thus, by the 1940s, many more ordinary people started to wear woven fabrics on a daily basis. It should be remembered that during the previous three decades, a big number of the population in Buganda were still using bark-cloth for sartorial purposes, although many had at least one garment, usually donated by the missionaries for wearing while going to church.⁸ As one informant explained to me:

Cotton cultivation was initially an unprofitable venture. The little money one would get from the produce was just enough for the payment of poll tax, and for payment of school fees for the children. But by the late 1930s and the early 1940s, many more people had started to dress in woven garments more or less on a daily basis.

(okusooka Ppamba teyalimu ssente, ezavangamu zaali zimala bumazi okusasula omusolo, mpozzi n'okuweerela abaana mu ssomero. Naye mu myaka gy'asatu, ne gy'aana, abantu baali batandise okwambalira ddala engoye era ng'engoye mpozzi zisoose okufuuka ekyambalo ekya buli lunaku)⁹

Consequently, the manufacture of bark-cloth was left to only a few members of the community, particularly the elderly people, who could not cope up with the demands of commercial farming. It therefore, becomes clear at this stage that the political events, which led to change in the economic-structure both at the local and international level, contributed indirectly to the decline of the bark-cloth industry during the interwar/post-war period.

⁸ I will expound on the missionary contribution to the dress code of the Baganda in the next chapter.

⁹ Unrecorded anonymous focus group discussion in Kyaddondo County 16/12/2003.

However, in order to offset the possibility of inflation, the Protectorate Government decided, in 1942, to grant the cotton and coffee marketing boards monopoly rights over the export of both cotton and coffee. By so doing, the Protectorate administration was in a position to control the economy, as it had access to the resources from coffee and cotton exports. In addition, the Protectorate Government withheld a percentage of the money that was supposed to be paid to the farmers, as means to reduce the amount of money in circulation. The deducted funds, as it was claimed, were used to establish a “Price Assistance Fund” (PAF) for cotton and coffee growers in order to supplement their income in the case of possible cutback in cotton and coffee prices on the world market. According to the Protectorate administration, paying the growers only a percentage of the export price for their produce, and keeping the rest of the money in a reserve fund, would help to keep the economy in balanced state.¹⁰

However, the return of the *kawonawos* (war veterans) in the latter part of the 1940s marked a new episode in Buganda. Many war veterans had become more conscious of the international economic developments, and the political activities prevailing beyond their surroundings. Thus, it soon became a general view of the ordinary people in Buganda that the Price Assistance Fund was politically constructed to keep the indigenous population at the foot of the economic ladder. Their view was not

¹⁰ However, the problem was that, what was conceived as a temporary measure, during the war period, eventually became official policy that was maintained for several years. Based on statistical evidence, the amount of money paid to the cotton and coffee growers during the 1940s amounted to less than 50% of the export price. For example, various reports indicate that in 1942/43, the price paid to the cotton growers was as low as 28% of the world commodity price, rising to 38% in 1945 (Nabudere 1980: 83), reaching 50% in 1950, and rolling back to 39% in 1951 and finally settling at 45% in 1952. By the end of 1953, as Wrigley claims, “the farmers of Uganda had involuntarily contributed nearly £30 million to price assistance funds and about £22 million to development projects of various kinds” (1970: 70). It has been claimed in some academic quarters that this amount was used in part, to aid the British war efforts (Mamdani 1999: 180) and that the remainder “was transferred to an African development fund to finance special educational, medical, and developmental projects” (Low and Pratt 1960: 317). However what is clear is that some of this money was used to establish the first manufacturing industries in Uganda as I discuss later in this chapter.

groundless, because by the 1920s, there was a general concern among the indigenous community about the unfair economic policies that supported the domination of the agricultural trade industry by the non-African community. The laws which were enacted following the [B]uganda Agreement of 1900, restricted the indigenous people to cultivation of cash-crops while the processing and marketing of agricultural produce became a responsibility of the non-African population, that is, Indians and Europeans respectively.¹¹ This clear-cut division of the economy prompted the peasant growers, as early as the second decade of the twentieth-century, to form associations, through which, they could have a unified voice¹². Little was it known at that time, that it was through such small associations that big riots were to emerge that disrupted the political and economic status quo during the mid-twentieth century, leading to the transformation of the symbolic value of bark-cloth, as I explain in the remaining part of the chapter.

In 1941, the Uganda African Farmers Union, (UAFU), an umbrella organization of the co-operative societies, was formed whose objectives were both of an economic as well as political nature. Through the UAFU, the cotton and coffee growers started to follow more closely the political and economic events as they unveiled in the Protectorate. For example, in 1943, the colonial government deliberated on a plan to set up an Empire Cotton Growing Research Centre in Buganda, and to upgrade Makerere

¹¹ A few locals were employed in the transport sector, as drivers, in order to transport cotton (and later other produce) from the buying centers to ginneries, and the cotton lint from the ginneries to the export terminals.

¹² Wadada Nabudere reports that the first ‘unofficial’ co-operative societies emerged in Buganda in 1913 when four farmers in Ssinga formed the Kina Kulya Growers Society, whose aim was to market their crop on a co-operative basis. Ten years later, another co-operative society of five farmers, called the Buganda Growers Association was established, purportedly as a channel for forwarding grievances of the African peasant farmers to the Protectorate Administration, in particular, those concerning oligopolistic control over the marketing of cotton (1980: 90). Nabudere further mentions that by 1938, fifteen societies had been operating ‘illegally’ and the colonial state itself was becoming uneasy about them, arguing that they served little purpose (ibid: 91).

College to University College status. Both of these proposals had one thing in common: they required a change or circumvention of the Land Alienation Law earlier imposed to prevent further parcelling of the Kabaka's land for Government projects. Hence, it was proposed that the *Lukiiko* should buy the land (on behalf of the Protectorate Government) but this proposal was opposed out-right by the smaller chiefs and the *Katikkiro* Wamala, culminating in his forced resignation and the re-instatement of Nsibirwa, who had earlier been forced to step down following the riots caused by his support of the scandalous re-marriage of the *Nnamasole* referred to earlier in this section. A decision was reached despite that opposition, and the plans for the expansion and construction of new premises for Makerere College, and the Agricultural research centre went ahead.

From the perspective of the indigenous population in Buganda, the developments just discussed above, were perceived as a new mode of colonial exploitation. The outcome was an infamous widespread riot of January 16-19, 1945, and the assassination of *Katikkiro* Nsibirwa on September 11 of the same year. Thenceforth, the indigenous population, through various organizations started to challenge more openly the colonial policies. Thus at a general meeting of the indigenous growers organized by the UAFU on 18th May 1948, it was resolved that time had come for the indigenous farmers to begin to take control of the production and processing of their produce. In a document presented to the Protectorate Government, the UAFU expressed its intention to collect and gin all the cotton to be harvested beginning in the harvest year 1948/49. The Union further requested that the Protectorate Government should provide the necessary assistance to have the cotton ginned (on the Union's behalf) at a reasonable price, at the nearest ginneries, most of which were at that time, largely owned by non-African community.

As the time of harvest approached, the Union went ahead to collect the cotton from its member associations, but could not have the cotton ginned due to the furious resistance from government and the ginners. The situation turned more complex when the UAFU refused to part with its cotton, and at the same time, the Uganda Company refused to render its ginning services. What this essentially meant was that the cotton growers were stacked with their raw cotton, the ginners were redundant with no cotton to process, and the government's stores and coffers lay empty without any cotton to export.

To bring the matter to a close, the Protectorate Government set up a legal marketing period beyond which no cotton could be sold, but this did not deter the cotton growers from clinging fast onto their produce. In a further attempt to coerce the growers to give up their demands, it was declared a legal offence for growers to store cotton on any, but licensed premises, these being the ginneries (Mamdani 1999: 181). This declaration stirred a fresh bout of riots in Buganda in April 1949, which spilled over to other regions, thereby sparking a nationwide crisis that was resolved only after the Protectorate Government had accepted to open the door to indigenous cooperative participation in the processing of their produce. Immediately after the 1949 riots, the Protectorate Government made arrangements to purchase the Ngogwe Ginnery from Liverpool Uganda Company and lease it to the Uganda Growers' Cooperative Union. Four years later, the coffee industry was also re-organized when the government announced a plan for the establishment of six new African-owned coffee curing works.

The political situation just discussed provides a background upon which I analyse change in the role and meaning of bark-cloth in Buganda during the mid-1950s. Bark-cloth ceased to be a matter of economic concern as the Baganda focused on exerting

political pressure on the government to involve them in the political and economic affairs, the focus of the next section.

6.6 Deportation of Muteesa II: Redefinition of the Symbolic Function of Bark-Cloth during the 1950s

When Sir James Cohen arrived as Governor of the Protectorate in 1952, he proposed constitutional changes that were to transform the political and administrative structure of the Protectorate. Despite the fact that he had no prior experience in colonial administration, as this was his first appointment, Cohen was enthusiastic about the advancement and implementation of policies that would lead to the democratization of the political and economic affairs of the Protectorate. However, as has been discussed, at the time of Cohen's arrival, there was already growing political consciousness in Buganda, and the Baganda were wary of any proposals advanced by the colonial administration. Hence, in 1953, when Cohen unveiled his plans for constitutional development about which he had already briefed the Kabaka, his ideas were received with mixed feelings among the ordinary community. Two basic changes in reference to Buganda were at stake:

Firstly, Cohen proposed that sixty of the eighty-nine members of the *Lukiiko* (Buganda royal council) be elected, and that the Kabaka should consult the members of the *Lukiiko* before selecting his ministers (Low and Pratt 1960:318). Apparently, the above reforms were partly in response to the demands persistently made by the clan leaders, through their movement, the Bataka Union. The clan leaders constantly expressed concern about the way their chiefs had turned into political puppets of the

colonial administration. Thus they pressed for an increase in the number of representatives to the *Lukiiko*, and an opportunity to elect their own representatives yet this was contrary to the jurisdiction of the Kabaka, and it was likely to weaken the entrenched position of the chiefs. Moreover, Low and Pratt argued that, “Unless the Kabaka and the chiefs could maintain their own political positions in Buganda [,] power could be expected to shift towards those critics of the old régime who had, till then been on the periphery of political respectability” (1960: 319).

Secondly, Cohen proposed to increase the representation on the Legislative Council, a constitutional body, whose members were at liberty to vote for or against any issue treated by the Government as a matter of confidence. The number of these members was to be increased from sixteen to twenty-eight, fourteen of whom, were for the first time, to be drawn from the indigenous community.¹³

However, the above developments were overshadowed by a speech given that same year by Oliver Lyttelton (later Lord Chandos), Secretary of State for the Colonies at a meeting of the East African Dinner Club in which he alluded to a possible confederation¹⁴ of East African territories, published in the *East African Standard* of 3rd July 1953. Lyttelton’s statement revived strong feelings of resistance earlier displayed by the Baganda throughout the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s, against the confederation of the

¹³ By implication, the Kabaka was obliged to cooperate with the colonial administration to advance the above reforms.

¹⁴ In several publications on this subject, the term ‘confederation’ has often been substituted for ‘federation’ yet there is a significant difference in meaning between the two words. According to the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, the term ‘confederation’, which is the subject of our discussion, is defined as “an alliance of a number of parties or groups; a more or less permanent union of states with some political power vested in a central authority (2002:298). Yet on the contrary, ‘federation’ refers to “a federal group of states; an organization within which smaller divisions have some degree of internal autonomy (ibid: 519). It is therefore not clear which of the two policies, Lyttelton and other British colonial officers, actually referred to. Given the extent of the opposition with which the Baganda treated the subject, I am compelled to assume that it was more of confederation than federation they were against.

Uganda Protectorate with the Kenya Colony. According to their argument, the proposed confederation was contrary to the [B]uganda Agreement of 1900 by which it was stipulated that the autonomy of the kingdom of Buganda should be preserved. Thus, in response, members of the Uganda National Congress¹⁵ drafted a memorandum deploring the secretary's remarks and declaring that they were compelled to take steps to safeguard their future. They demanded that the affairs of Buganda be transferred to the Foreign Office and that a time limit be set for the independence of Buganda within the Commonwealth. The memorandum read as follows:

We disagree with being united with those territories which have different customs, ways of living, and agreements which are entirely different from ours. For that reason, we, the members of the UNC Buganda branch, have met and decided that Buganda as a separate kingdom should be removed from the Colonial Office into the Foreign Office (as quoted in Mamdani 1996:211).

Hence, in 1953 when the colonial administration called on Kabaka Frederick Muteesa II to submit the names of the Baganda representatives to the Legislative Council (popularized as Legico), a demand he turned down, for the fear that this was a tactical way to bring Buganda into the Confederation, he was arrested on 30th November, and deported to England on pretext that he had defied Article 6 of the [B]uganda Agreement of 1900, which stipulated that:

So long as the Kabaka, chiefs, and people of [B]uganda shall conform to the laws and regulations instituted for their governance by Her Majesty's Government, and shall co-operate loyally with Her Majesty's Government in the organization and administration of the said Kingdom of [B]uganda, Her Majesty's Government agrees to recognize the Kabaka of [B]uganda

¹⁵ UNC was the first major political party in the Protectorate, which came into existence after the 1949 riots discussed earlier in this chapter.

as the native ruler of the province of [B]uganda under Her Majesty's protection and over-rule (as quoted in Low & Pratt 1960: 352).

Little did the British colonial administrators know at that time that by tampering with the occupant of the royal throne, they were actually leading the Protectorate Government into a head-on collision with the people of Buganda. The deportation of Kabaka Muteesa II brought together all the Baganda, irrespective of their political beliefs, gender or social background, to fight for his return to Buganda. Many Baganda began to contemplate the nature of relationship Buganda had established with the British colonial government in the past fifty years, and many even questioned the essence of European 'civilization'. In the period that followed, everything almost came to a standstill and there was a swift change in the way the Baganda related to Westerners in general, and Western concepts in particular. Paulo Kavuma, the *Katikkiro* during that tragic period, and who was with the Kabaka at the time he was arrested and sent to exile, states:

The hatred felt by many Baganda for all Europeans because of what had happened was shared by a number of Christians who argued that if the members of the protectorate administration had been God-fearing men they would never have committed the injustice they had done in deposing the Kabaka. Many gave up attending church, and in some churches the only ones in the congregation were children. ... They [the adults] said that it was Europeans who had brought Christianity to the country yet those same people had been responsible for the Kabaka's deportation. It was therefore only right for the Baganda to return to their old customs. People also began to give up beer-drinking [(perhaps they resorted to local brew)], and attendance at football matches declined almost to nothing... [Further,]...[m]any people refused to assemble even when the Assistant Resident's visits were concerned with entirely neutral matters... The people's determination was remarkable and the grief of the Baganda spread to all parts of the Protectorate... If the Kabaka is not to return, people said, we will have nothing to do with the protectorate administration (1979:50-51, 55-56).

Whereas by the mid-twentieth-century most of the Baganda had ceased to wear bark-cloth, the situation changed shortly after the deportation of the Kabaka. Bark-cloth soon became a fabric with multi-layered meanings, as I discuss in the next paragraphs.

As far as the Baganda were concerned, the deposition of their Kabaka was almost equated to his death; thus, many people in Buganda reverted to wearing bark-cloth as a symbol of mourning and allegiance to the Buganda monarchy, but also as a sign of protest against the colonial administration. This multi-faceted meaning of bark-cloth resonates with Victoria L. Rovine's observation that "The retention of local dress can become, in a situation of dramatic cultural collision, a form of resistance or a means of negotiating change" (2001: 103). After several months of informal mourning, a resolution was passed by the *Lukiiko* to organize a formal demonstration against the Kabaka's deposition. Thus 8th and 9th February 1954 were declared days of mourning throughout Buganda, and the evening of 7th February, was earmarked as a day of prayer in all places of worship, for the return of the Kabaka. This was an occasion when transformation in the symbolic value of bark-cloth became more evident since the missionaries had earlier on managed to persuade the converts to abandon bark-cloth. Many Baganda turned up in church on that weekend of "mourning", dressed "entirely in bark cloth while others wore bark cloth ties or coats, or had bands of bark cloth tied around their heads" (Kavuma 1979:54). The congregation turning up in Church while wearing bark-cloth was politically provocative. It implied the strong determination of the Baganda to challenge the authority of the Western religious and administrative leaders, and to explicitly show their support for the Kabaka, the political and symbolic centre. Bark-cloth was redefined as a fabric of authority based on Western fashion concepts: the jackets and neck-ties

made out of bark-cloth, serving in the least, as garments of mourning. but more significantly, to call for the return of power and authority to the indigenous administrative structure. Kavuma gives us a textual illustration of the events on the two days of official mourning. As he states, “Traders and shopkeepers closed their places of trade and the capital was full of people whose countenances betrayed their distress. Again many were dressed in bark cloth and some had bark cloth flags on their bicycles. Some even swore not to shave until the Kabaka returned” (ibid: 55).

At the *Lubiri* (royal palace), even the *Nnabagereka* (wife to the Kabaka) and her entourage were dressed in bark-cloth. Many Baganda emulated *Nnabagereka*’s decision by giving up western pleasures until Kabaka Muteesa II was re-instated on his throne. In the period that followed, it became common to find people dressed in bark-cloth instead of woven fabrics as had become the norm, and other trade items were reduced to a subject of gaze as many people refrained from buying Western products. Audrey I. Richards, who was at the time, working at Makerere Institute of Social Research, states that even “Clerks and other employees of Makerere College began to wear bark-cloth over their [Western] suits” (1964: 327). Bark-cloth, an artefact that had been deemed as ‘satanic’, by the Christian missionaries half a century ago, was re-invented. In addition to the renaissance of its cultural significance, in terms of meaning, bark-cloth also took on a new dimension. It became a symbol of protest by the Baganda against the deposition of their Kabaka.

Emile Durkheim, a sociologist who stresses the benefits of society for the individual, observes the importance of material things in conveying specific ideas and sentiments. He argues that things exhibit a certain dialectical quality in that they are

invested with meaning but may themselves be integral to the reproduction of ideas that contribute to group unity in time and space (cited in Renne 1995: 6). This view is apparently presented in the context of cloth and textiles by Annette B. Weiner and Jane Schneider who state that “to seek the symbolic potentialities of cloth in its material properties is...but a preliminary step...equally important [to observe] are the human actions that make cloth politically and socially salient”(1989: 3). Likewise, Grant McCracken states that, “clothing is sometimes a confirmation of change and sometimes an initiation of change. It is sometimes a means of constituting the nature and terms of political conflict and sometimes a means of creating consensus” (1987: 109). However, it is noteworthy that the idea of using cloth to communicate social or political grievances is not unique to Buganda. As Rovine has observed:

The world over, clothing revivals have been used as a form of protest against the economic, political, and religious policies of a ruling class. Specifically, in Africa and other former strongholds of colonial power, clothing and fashion have served as potent tools in struggles for independence. As such, cloth and clothing may come to serve as symbols of nationalistic sentiment (2001:100).

Other scholars have cited various examples where clothing has been used as a political tool in the service of African social movements.¹⁶

¹⁶ For example, Betty M. Wass has documented the role of dress in Nigeria’s independence movement, describing how non- European styles of dress became a sign of solidarity with the nationalistic cause. She states that although European-style attire became increasingly popular during the early twentieth century, a sign of prosperity and sophistication, by mid-century, “nationalistic feelings fueled by the independence movement prompted Nigerians to use dress as one means of severing themselves from colonialists and identifying with the political cause (as quoted in Rovine 2001: 102). Likewise, Leander Schneider analyses explicitly how the Maasai community of Tanzania resisted ‘Operation Dress-Up’ a cultural campaign organised by the Tanzanian Independent Government in the late 1960s through the 1970s, aimed at changing the Maasai’s dress tradition and body care (2003:485-493). On the other hand, Ali Mazurui pointed out that the Tanzanian Government considered Maasai insistence on indigenous dress as a symbol of rebellion but also as “a cultural assertion by a quiet defiance” (1970:27). He also mentions of a dramatic event where Eliud Mathu, the first African member of the Kenyan Legislative Council, once tore his jacket off at a public meeting in a dramatic gesture of rejecting British colonial rule saying ‘Take back your

After two years of serious negotiation, and legal battles that vetoed the colonial government's attempts to appoint a successor to the royal throne, Kabaka Muteesa II was allowed to return to Buganda on 17th October 1955. As Peter M. Gukiina correctly asserts, "The Kabaka's return was overwhelmingly viewed [by many people in Uganda] as a complete victory of the Kabaka over the governor of Uganda and the British government" (1972: 99). On the day of his return from exile, many Baganda sported garments made out of bark-cloth while holding banners (also made out of bark-cloth) inscribed with welcome messages to their beloved Kabaka. Triumphal arches, *ebiyitirirwa* (*ekiyitirirwa* sing.) covered with bark-cloth were erected all along the route, which Kabaka Muteesa II took from Entebbe airport to the royal palace of Mengo (approximately 30km). Richards mentions that the triumphal arches "had warriors' praise names inscribed on them: 'Osinze' ('You have triumphed' or 'have been proven Superior'), 'Owangudde' ('You have beaten the enemy'), etc." (1964: 325). Thenceforth, the *ebiyitiriwa*, decorated with bark-cloth, became a distinctive design feature in Buganda serving a new role of communicating the political and cultural authority of the monarch. They were erected whenever, and wherever, the Kabaka went to visit his subjects, a practice that has been maintained even in the twenty-first century. With the skills acquired through art and design education, the communicative functions of bark-cloth have further been enhanced with image and type. It is important to note that bark-cloth, which was originally displayed in doors for the partitioning of interior space, assumed a new role as a fabric of public display in order to augment the political position of the Kabaka that had been compromised since external infiltration. I will return to the

civilization – and give me back my land!' (ibid: 27). Outside Africa, Sumit Sakar (1973), C. A. Bayly (1986), Bernad S. Cohn (1989) have also noted Mahatma Gandhi's revival of *khadi*, a locally spun and woven-cloth, as part of India's resistance to British colonial rule.

symbolic connotations of the *ebiyitirirwa* in chapter nine where I discuss the current art and design practices, and the use of bark-cloth. Plate 9.7, in chapter nine, illustrates the *kiyitirirwa* erected in 2002 at Mengo in Kyaddondo County, in celebration of the 9th Coronation Anniversary of Kabaka Muwenda Mutebi II.

As I argue, the period between mid-1950s and 1960s marked a new era as regards the symbolic interpretation of bark-cloth in Buganda. This was a period when the cultural image of bark-cloth was restored, and many people felt proud to make use of this fabric in order to express their cultural-heritage. However, it would be misleading to claim that the Baganda preferred bark-cloth to modern woven fabrics, or to argue that they indeed wished to continue dressing in bark-cloth in the wake of globalization. Instead, the point I am trying to make here is that, with bark-cloth, the Baganda expressed their connectedness to the *Kabakaship*, the pillar of their cultural past. Hence, from the period that followed the Kabaka's return, the use of bark-cloth in the context of dress conveyed cultural as well as political meanings. Thus some saw it as a symbol of victory of the Baganda over British colonial rule, yet others considered dressing in bark-cloth garments as a means to express alliance with the leadership of the Kabaka. After several decades of recession, the bark-cloth industry was once again resuscitated. In her article, 'Bark Cloth Makers of Buganda' J. W. Chanell rightly observed that by the 1960s, bark-cloth was produced on a cottage industry basis throughout the whole of Buganda.

6.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, it has been observed that major changes that culminated in the demise of the bark-cloth industry of the Baganda occurred during the first half of the

twentieth century. With the abolition of mandatory labour from the interwar period, and the establishment of new laws that guaranteed more security to the peasant community, there was increased participation of the peasant community in the cultivation of cash crops throughout Buganda. This change in the pattern of subsistence agriculture, which was in part due to structural adjustments in the colonial policy, placed the bark-cloth industry in a marginal position. By the end of the interwar period, the bark-cloth industry had been left to only a few members of the Baganda community, especially the elderly, who could not cope up with the demands of the cash crop economy. It has been made clear that apart from change in the agricultural policy, there were also other factors that played a key role in the transformation of the bark-cloth industry, and most importantly, in extending the symbolic code of bark-cloth beyond cultural and economic boundaries. The political crisis of the 1950s featured prominently in this chapter, as it was these events, which triggered the identification of bark-cloth with cultural protest and identity while drawing on its original associations with death. The crisis thus well articulates the notion of change and continuity of the role and meaning of bark-cloth among the Baganda society. In the next chapter, I discuss the role of education in the evolution of the application, role and meaning of bark-cloth in Buganda.

7 WESTERN EDUCATION: ITS CONTRIBUTION TO THE VISUAL-CULTURAL TRANSFORMATIONS AND THE ROLE OF BARK-CLOTH IN BUGANDA

7.1 Introduction

I now come to Western education, another important factor in analysing change and continuity in the role and meaning of bark-cloth of the Baganda. I mainly focus on the “Western” type of education, which was introduced concurrently with Christianity in Buganda during the late 1870s by the CMS missionaries and the Roman Catholic missionaries (popularly referred to as the White Fathers) respectively. Beginning at the Kabaka’s palace, the two religious factions educated the Baganda in the art of reading, as a prerequisite for conversion to Christianity. Later, the Baganda were introduced to the technology of writing, and arithmetic.¹ The 3Rs (reading, ‘riting, and ‘rithmetic) formed the foundation upon which developed other aspects of Western education. Whereas it is an undisputable fact that Western education was a key factor to social and economic development in the interior of East Africa especially beginning in the twentieth century, it is also worthy noting that Western education, to a recognizable extent, had a negative impact on cultural developments in the region. As a result, several aspects of indigenous culture came to be despised, discouraged, transformed, or even abandoned on the basis that they were not conforming to the Christian faith. This chapter formulates a background for chapter nine, where I discuss at length the contemporary functions of

¹ Historical sources indicate that the coastal Swahili-Arab traders, who were the first foreigners to reach Buganda, introduced literacy skills to the Baganda by way of teaching the Koran to Kabaka Suuna II, and later to his successor, Muteesa I (Kaggwa 1927: 123, 124; Oded 1974: 50, 62, 65; Furley and Watson 1978:96). However, it was the European missionaries who made these skills available to a wider community both within and outside the royal domain.

bark-cloth in art and design practice. Hence it does not focus on bark-cloth *per se*, but examines the broad issues within the system of Western education, which contributed to the transformation of the role and meaning of bark-cloth.

In order to analyse clearly this cultural transformation of the bark-cloth, I have found it necessary to begin the chapter by reflecting on the indigenous education system of the Baganda, and how it was applied to bark-cloth production, the focus of this thesis. Pre-Western education was a communal activity, where every member of the Baganda society played a role; hence it was an integrated component of the Baganda culture and for that reason, it was a way of life. In the second section of the chapter, I consider the Western “school” system of education as introduced by the missionaries. I pay specific attention to the “Western” curriculum, which as I argue, was designed to inculcate European principles and values to the indigenous societies, in many cases at the expense of their own. The intervention by the Uganda Protectorate government in the provision and supervision of education, beginning in the early 1920s forms the theme for the third section. Specifically, I consider Government’s efforts to restructure the secular education system in the Protectorate, and the recommendations of the various educational commissions that were set up in the 1920s and 1930s to address this issue.² The purpose is to examine how the emerging change in the education system prompted further change in the symbolic value of bark-cloth. To conclude the chapter, I present the radical ideologies of Margaret Trowell, a British missionary, whose professional background in the visual arts and education, and whose exposure to the education system in the

² It is noteworthy that because the kingdom of Buganda was then the center of colonial administration, any developments, social, economic or political, were always first applied in Buganda before they were adopted throughout the Protectorate. Therefore, it is vital that I consider how these developments specifically relate to the thesis of this study.

neighbouring Kenya colony, which did not extend much opportunities for art instruction. to the indigenous students, prompted her, upon arrival in Uganda, to advocate the development of art education based on indigenous traditions.

7.2 Indigenous Education System of the Baganda

The Baganda devised various methods of transmitting cultural information to their younger members, as indeed was the case with any other ethnic societies elsewhere in Africa. Using formal and informal means, adults passed on their cultural heritage to the young generation thereby enabling them to adapt to their physical environment, and to articulate and appreciate their role in the social, economic and political affairs of their community. Among the Baganda society, education was never transmitted in a secluded environment, as is the case with Western education. Instead, education was conducted as part of the day-to-day activities of the people. It was therefore a way of life.

Right from an early stage, it was a common practice for the parents to teach their children different skills based on their biological gender divisions. The type of education offered was dependent on the socio-economic or political duties that the young members were expected to fulfil in the wider community during their adulthood. For the most part, the children received their lifelong learning experience at home although a few privileged ones (boys only) enrolled in the *kigalagala* (indigenous school of political science) at the Kabaka's palace whereas a few others received training in social administration at the *bisaakaate* (*kisaakaate*, sing.), the high reed-fenced enclosures of the chiefs.

At the royal palace, the *bagalagala* (court pages) were in camp training to become future leaders. They spent most of their time learning royal etiquette and methods of

administration. As opposed to the *bagalagala*, the young *bakembuga* (girls-in-waiting to become wives of the aristocrats) were put under the instruction of the senior royal wives to learn the social etiquette befitting women of the aristocratic class. Their training was thus centred on various aspects of royal domestic service including among others: preparing *akatuuso* (royal dinner), making the Kabaka's bed, and engaging in some light gardening activities in the royal gardens. The *bakembuga* were not subjected to hard labour as was the case with the ordinary women, since they were not expected to produce any surplus. They basically lived off the tributes from the commoners and had an abundant labour supply from their kindred and slaves, to assist them in their day-to day activities. As for the rest of the Baganda, education, to a great extent, focused on providing essential skills required for sustaining community life, beginning with the family, the basic organizational structure.

As in the aristocratic domain, provision of education within the domain of the commoners was structured along biological gender variations. Hence in preparation for domestic service and motherhood, girls received training from a very early age, usually from about five years. They were trained in various domestic skills ranging from childcare, food preparation (with attention in the first years, focused on peeling *matooke*, plantains the staple food of the Baganda, and later on, cooking), cultivation of food crops (as there were originally no cash crops), and tending to the *lusuku* (plantain garden). The girls were also taught homecare management by way of production of the essential home crafts especially mats and baskets. It was always the responsibility of the mothers or other female adults in the family to teach the girls the above necessary skills.

On the other hand, the curriculum for boys emphasized among others: house-construction, clearing of fields in preparation for farming, hunting, beer brewing, warfare skills, fabrication of various implements for farming, making of spears, shields and other war tools, canoe construction, drum making, leather processing and above all, bark-cloth manufacture. The underlying principle of this type of indigenous education was, therefore, to uphold the cultural values of the Baganda, and to maintain the social, economic and political integrity of their society.³ As Immaculate N. Kizza has observed, “each individual in a family [knew] exactly what they [were] supposed to be doing to keep the family functioning, and there [was] mutual respect for each group’s work because members [knew] that each group’s work [was] essential to the running of the family and [could] not be done satisfactorily by those not traditionally trained to do it” (1999:6). At a macro level, it was the responsibility of each clan to ensure that its younger members received appropriate training in the various aspects relating to their clan’s traditions. Most specifically, the young members were made conscious of their contribution to the welfare of the clan as well as the clan’s contribution to the welfare of the Kabaka and the members of the royal family, who formed the apex of the hierarchical social-structure of the Baganda.

It was not until the infiltration of the non-African community into Buganda, particularly the European explorers and Western missionaries that a rapid change was to occur that overshadowed, and in many cases, replaced the indigenous methods of education. The outcome of this cultural contact was a new system of education that could

³ Whereas this customary education was susceptible to change as it was being passed on from generation to generation, what is important to note is that it retained the basic principles that were crucial for the preservation and continuity of the cultural identity of the Baganda.

only be transmitted in the “school”, a secluded environment away from home. Essentially, the “school” propagated the alienation of young members from their community and sheltered them from gaining cultural exposure. since the kind of education offered therein was principally modelled on the Western ideologies. as I will discuss later in this chapter. But because the locus of this thesis is on bark-cloth, it is crucial at this stage that I expound a little more on the indigenous education as it applied in the case of bark-cloth manufacture.

7.2.1 Indigenous Education and its Application to Bark-cloth Manufacture

Right from a very early stage, usually about the age of six or seven years, the Baganda boys were introduced to the art of bark-cloth making. It was a common practice for the elders to call upon the young boys to come around the *kkomagi* (bark-cloth house) to observe the bark-cloth-making activity while the girls were sent off to assist their mothers in agricultural duties and or food preparation. The young boys would be slowly introduced to the profession; first by being called upon to render minimal assistance in such simple tasks like gathering firewood to be used during the steaming of the harvested bark, or collecting the green banana leaves for wrapping around the skinned portion of the *mutuba* (bark-cloth) tree in order to protect it against any possible damages, or assisting the elders to parcel the bark prior to the steaming process, as illustrated in plate 7.1.

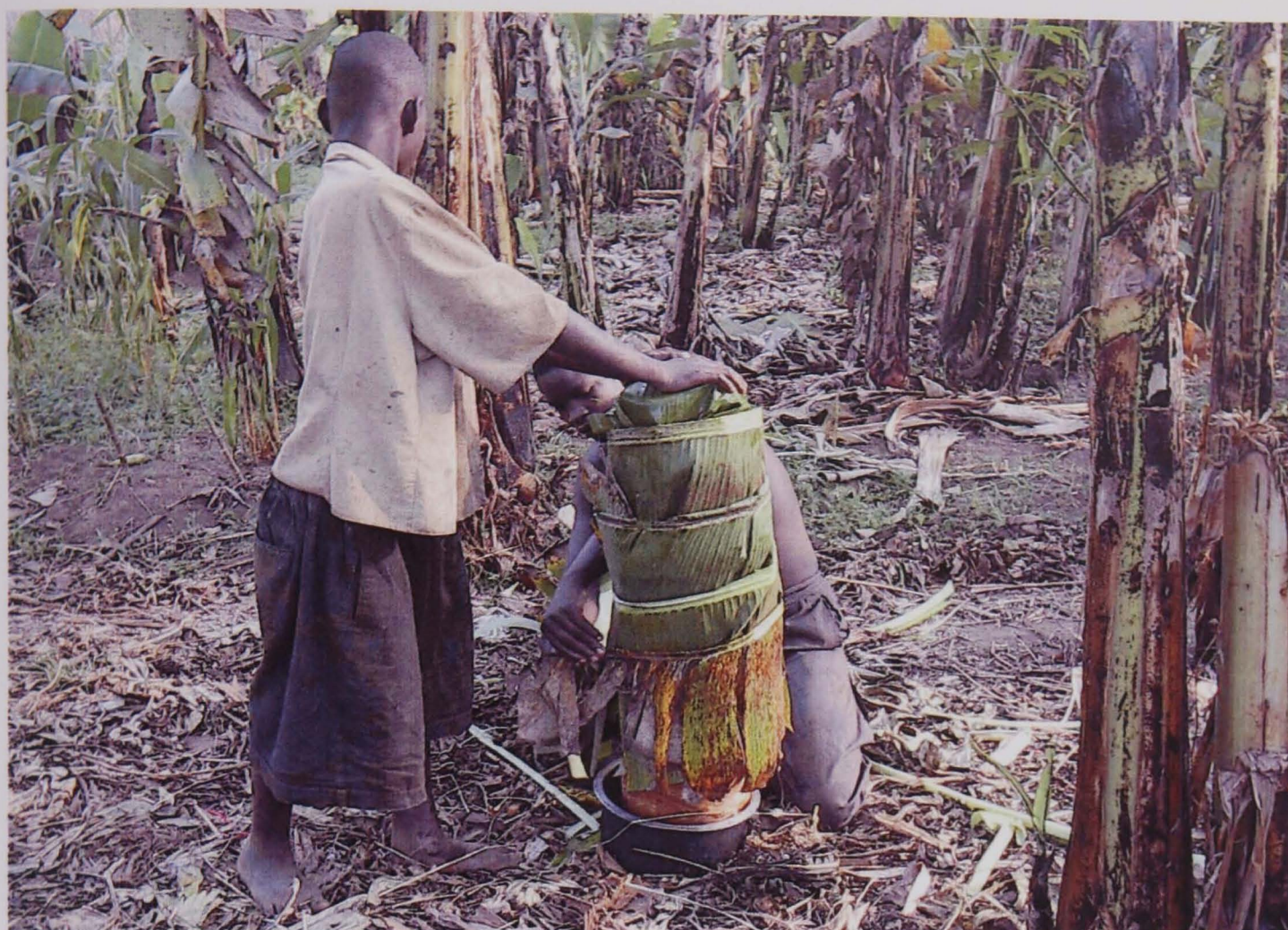


Plate 7.1 Ventino Majwala and son preparing the bark for the steaming process, Photo by the author

It was a common practice for such young boys to try to simulate the bark-cloth making process in their games as one informant explained to me: “We used to play games of bark-cloth making by extracting the bark of shrubs from the garden; for the beaters, we improvised with small logs, which we collected easily from the garden. Yet, for girls, mock-cooking was their major game” (“Ffe twazzanyanga emizzanyo gy’okukomaga, nga tususumbula ekikuta ku bittittiriri eby’omu nnimiro era nga tufuna obukonyogo, obwonno bwetwaakozesaanga ng’ensamo. Mpozzi abawala bbo omuzannyo ogwabwe, baafumbafumbanga”) (Ssaazi, interview, December, 2002). By way of such games, the young boys had an opportunity to transform their observations into practice. By the age of ten, or even before, the boys were considered big enough to start getting involved in the actual process of bark-cloth manufacture.

7.2.2 The Teaching Process

Because the trade of bark-cloth making required teamwork, so it followed that even the training of young members in bark-cloth manufacture was a corporate activity. It was the responsibility of the male adults, in most cases family members, friends and or neighbours, to provide the necessary education to the younger apprentices, and to reprimand those who were not keen to learn the profession. It is worthy noting that the teaching happened in a real life situation, in the workshop environment as the adults carried out their day-to-day bark-cloth-making activities. By way of practical demonstration, the apprentices would be guided progressively through the entire process of bark-cloth manufacture beginning with the preparation of tools and good storage procedures; appropriate procedures for stripping the bark off the *mutuba* tree; the scraping process; the beating process; the oxidation process; up to the finishing process. The apprentices learnt the correct way to handle the *nsaamo* (bark-cloth mallet) in order to prevent the bark from splitting during the initial beating process.

The apprentice was allowed to practice the technology, initially using the *kikaaku* (first bark to be harvested off the *mutuba* tree), which in economic terms, was of a lower value since it seldom yielded a fabric of a high quality. It usually took a fairly long period of time (ranging from several months to several years) for the young apprentice to attain the required level of expertise. Nevertheless, the adults from time to time, called upon these apprentices to join them during the fabrication of high quality bark-cloths like the *kimote*⁴ type, to enable them gain more experience. By the age of fifteen or sixteen, most

⁴ For details relating to the preparation of *kimote*, see chapter three.

of the Baganda boys would be actively involved in the trade of bark-cloth manufacture, operating at a professional level. At the same time, many of them would already be engaged in teaching similar skills to their siblings and other younger members of the community, thus ensuring the continuity of the profession. As O. W. Furley and T. Watson, education historians on East Africa have noted, “The African methods had some great advantages, for their schools were more community-centred and placed more reliance upon the home and society for educational training, instead of relying too completely on the school” (1978:45).

There were no official (big) ceremonies to mark the end of the training period, but the apprentice’s ability to make good quality bark-cloth was regarded as a sign of professional as well as physical maturity. I was informed that members of the family sometimes celebrated informally when a boy made his first bark-cloth unaided by preparing a “special”⁵ meal (*matooke* served with chicken stew) in order to mark the occasion (Omulangira Kansere, interview, June 2002). In an interview with Erifaazi Ssaazi, he explained to me the level of seriousness with which the Baganda considered the issue of training their sons in the technology of bark-cloth production. Ssaazi pointed out:

According to the information I have from my late grand-father [who grew up during the late nineteenth century], it was impossible for any young boy to reach the age of fifteen or sixteen without having sound skills in bark-cloth making. In addition, for one to say that so and so had reached the age of maturity, and was therefore ready to get married, was contingent on his ability to make a high quality bark-cloth, not a shoddy one.

⁵ A typical menu of the Baganda is predominantly vegetarian, comprising of *matooke* (green plantains) and beans or groundnut sauce. Thus, chicken and meat-stew were special dishes as they are rarely served on a daily basis.

(“Nze Jjajja wange yangambanga nti bbo we baavubukira, nga tekisoboka omwana omulenzi okuweza emyaka ekkumi n’etaano oba ekkumi n’omukaaga nga tamanyi kukomaga. Era okugamba nti omuvubuka asajjakudde oba atuuse okuwasa ng’asobola bulungi okukomaga olubugo, nga ssi kibugobugo”) (interview, December 2002).

In fact, several bark-cloth makers that I interviewed affirmed that they were introduced to the technology of bark-cloth making before the age of ten. For example, Vincent Ssemikaya received his first formal training at the age of nine, Ventino Majwala at the age of seven, while *Omulangira* (Prince) George William Kansere at the age of six.

Having reviewed the indigenous methods of education, let us proceed to examine the “school” system as it unveiled in Buganda beginning in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century. It should be remembered that the key issue that this chapter prepares grounds to address relates to the overall implications of Western education to cultural developments in Buganda, and its resultant impact on evolutionary process of the symbolic functions of bark-cloth.

7.3 Western Christian Education versus Indigenous Education in Buganda?

That Western education contributed towards cultural development in Buganda remains a contestable subject among cultural historians. As Kizza observed, “Education, ‘western’ style education that is, supposedly made people’s lives better depending on the definition one has of a good life, but it, undisputedly destroyed traditional cultures across the [African] continent” (1999:50). Following H.M Stanley’s visit in 1875, Kabaka Muteesa I invited the Europeans to come to his kingdom to share their religion and other Western values and technological skills with the people of Buganda. The Kabaka’s palace, therefore, became the first mission school with members of the royal family

enrolling as the first “learners”. Within a short period, other members of the royal domain, including chiefs and a few of the royal pages had joined the educational race. Through their spirit of competitiveness (a positive virtue that the Baganda have always had in abundance) the royal pages and chiefs did not hesitate to emulate the example of Dallington Scopion Muftaa, an ex- slave boy from the East African coast (Furley and Watson 1978: 96)⁶ who came with Stanley to Buganda in 1875. Upon his departure in 1876, Stanley left Muftaa at the royal palace so that he could teach Kabaka Muteesa I more about the “true” religion. Muftaa had turned multi-lingual because in addition to English, he was fluent in the Swahili language as well as Arabic. Thus, by seeing such a 16-year-old African boy having the “extraordinary ability” to read and write well enough, particularly in English, to the extent that he even became the Kabaka’s personal secretary, was a fascinating experience for the Baganda (Furley and Watson 1978: 96). More so, because of the fact that Kabaka Muteesa I even rewarded him with a chieftainship, was a vivid example of the advantages of subscribing to Western education, which was at that time closely entangled with Christianity. Hence, it was against this background that many Baganda, beginning with the chiefs and royal pages, zealously undertook the study of this new religion, which also provided them with an opportunity to learn the art of reading and technology of writing. Musoke Zimbe, a Muganda historian, former royal page at Kabaka Muteesa I’s palace, and one of the pioneers to convert to Christianity, mentioned that close to 160 people and 24 men [chiefs] of the Kabaka’s household subscribed to “reading” the Christian religion (1939:59). The philosophy of missionary education in Buganda is summarily stated in

⁶ H. P. Gale mentions that Muftaa was from Nyasaland, present Malawi (1959: 12).

the letter of Mackay (an influential pioneer CMS missionary to Buganda) to his sister.

Mackay wrote:

A powerful race ha[d] to be won from darkness to light; superstition and idolatry ha[d] to be overthrown; men ha[d] to be taught to love God and love their neighbour, which mean[t] the uprooting of institutions that ha[d] lasted for centuries; labour made noble, the slave set free, knowledge imparted, and wisdom implanted, and above all, that true wisdom taught which alone [could] elevate man from a brute to a son of God (as quoted in Hawes 1970: 179-180).

According to Mackay's letter, the principal objective of the European missionaries was to deliver the African from "darkness" to "light" (a concept that became culturally loaded during the nineteenth-century), by turning him/her into a completely new being, body and soul. The "Dark Continent" metaphor, as Sanyal explains, had been used in the eighteenth-century to refer to the mystery of a vast continent largely unexplored by the Europeans. However, in the nineteenth-century, this metaphor "came to represent the precise opposite of all that Europe had stood for since the age of Enlightenment." As he further explains, the term became particularly popular in reference to mission work because the 'Light' that the missionaries claimed to have brought to Africa could only be recognized if it was projected on this *constructed* darkness (Sanyal 2001:22-23). Whereas this missionary educational strategy was possibly meant to make a positive contribution to the social development of the Africans, for a cultural historian, this "darkness/light" binary was counterproductive as it degraded many aspects of the indigenous cultures. As agents of Western civilization, the missionaries occupied a privileged social position: thus they influenced the attitudes of the Baganda at all levels of the social stratum, from the Kabaka to the lowest common person. During their religious educational activities,

the missionaries utilized every opportunity to condemn and demean the indigenous attitudes, beliefs, practices and values, which they regarded as backward and profane.

In Buganda, as in many other parts of sub-Saharan Africa, where Christianity took root during the mid- and late-nineteenth-century, the indigenous people were taught to appreciate Western values instead of their own, and possibly to become more or less like Europeans. They learned that many of their indigenous artefacts carried satanic connotations, and they were therefore called upon to surrender them, as a prerequisite to conversion to Christianity. John Mary Waliggo informs us that, "Canon law obliged preachers to condemn all traditions and superstitions which offended directly or indirectly the Decalogue, even if they saw no hope of ever making their converts abandon them" (1976: 268). Yet, because of its cultural importance, bark-cloth featured prominently; most of the artefacts were either made out bark-cloth, or they were preserved or stored using this fabric. Thus, for the Western missionaries, bark-cloth came to symbolize the "satanic" practices of the Baganda, and its cultural symbolic significance was in the process, misinterpreted. A sense of negativity, deprivation and backwardness overshadowed the bark-cloth while the woven fabrics became the 'symbol' of conversion and civilization. As Kwame Nkurumah, sums it up, "such education ... put before us right from our infancy ideals of the metropolitan countries, ideals which could seldom be seen as representing the scheme, the harmony and the progress of the African society,"(as quoted in Bongoko 1992:3). With the collaboration of the Protectorate Government, at the turn of the twentieth century, the practice of indigenous religion was forbidden by state law and anyone found in this "vice" was immediately hauled up to justice (Hattersley 1908:225).

Many artefacts surrendered at the mission stations were openly set on fire to exemplify the everlasting fires awaiting those who would stick to ‘heathen practices’ while a lot others that survived the horrendous flames were sent by the missionaries to their home missions in Europe, as curious objects, to form part of the missionary and colonial exhibitions. Yet others were confined for life, in the ethnographic museums, where they serve a noble duty of teaching the Westerners (and others) about the ingenuity and *primitivity* of the Baganda. Moreover, Nick Stanley has noted that, of late, “ethnographic and anthropological displays have come to be seen as the visual apologies for forms of imperialism and racist pseudo-scientific evolutionary classification. The collections are themselves seen as contaminated by those who made them, principally the missionaries and colonial administrators” (1989:107). In support of this argument, B. Brake, J. McNeish and D. Simmons, also points out that:

They [referring to missionaries and colonial administrators] had a vested interest in denying any virtue to the society that they were seeking to change. Dress, behavior, social life and custom were sacrificed to their idea that a good Christian was a good European... [Hence] the images and artifacts made by the [indigenous] people either had to be destroyed or used as illustrations of ‘heathen’ idolatry to raise funds back home for the missionary endeavour (as quoted in Stanley 1989: 107).

A history of the colonial and missionary exhibitions has been well documented by Annie E. Coombes in her celebrated 1994 publication *Reinventing Africa: Museums, Material Culture and Popular Imagination in Late Victorian and Edwardian England*. According to her findings, the culture of public exhibitions in Great Britain, which John Atkison Hobson termed as the ‘spectatorial lust’ had its beginnings in the Great Exhibition of 1851. By 1890, national, international and colonial exhibitions became the arena of

renewed entrepreneurial ingenuity. The early exhibition grounds at Crystal Palace, Olympia, and White City were dedicated to the pursuit of spectacular pleasures derived from the diversity of culture and natural resources from the colonies. Coombes writes that, “By means not only of static displays of produce, raw materials and technology, but also of a variety of dramatic interludes and staged re-enactments, these exhibitions mobilized what passed in the popular consciousness as sociological investigation, historical objectivity and anthropological knowledge”(1994:63). Such exhibitions were usually privately sponsored by small groups of businessmen and politicians who had a stake in colonies.

The missionary exhibitions, on the other hand, were a communal activity in which members of the mission societies at home participated actively, as they were an important means of informing the congregations in Britain of the progress of their expeditions, and of soliciting financial and moral support. The London Missionary Society and the Church Missionary Society spearheaded the organization of Missionary Exhibitions in England. Four of the most popular missionary exhibitions were organized at the Royal Agricultural Hall, and the adjoining Gilby Hall in Islington in 1890, 1908, 1909 and 1922 respectively (ibid: 162- 165).

Further, the religious conflicts of the 1880s and 1890s, which have already been discussed in chapter four, expedited the spread of Christianity, education and textiles far beyond the perimeters of the Kabaka’s palace to the rest of the kingdom of Buganda and beyond. Wherever the Christian converts sought refuge, they opened churches and started teaching Biblical studies and literacy skills. In most cases, the same building served as a Church on Sundays, and was also used as a classroom during the weekdays. Many

people, irrespective of age, gender or social status, in the first years, converged in big numbers at these mission centres to partake of this new mode of education, which focused on a religious textbook, the Holy Bible. By the end of the nineteenth century, hundreds of Christian mission centres were founded throughout Buganda; some by the missionaries themselves while others were founded by the former chiefs and royal pages, who were the first to be exposed to Western education.

The curriculum in these schools-in-formation (popularized as “bush” schools but later re-named sub-grade schools) was limited to basic literary education, which was considered a prerequisite for effective bible teaching. Henceforth, *okusoma* (to “read”) became the new syndrome in Buganda to the extent that in Luganda, language of the Baganda, the word *okusoma* came to be applied interchangeably to refer to “reading” and “praying”, or “to go to church”, particularly among the Roman Catholics. In fact, as recently as 2004, *okusoma* is still used in the above three contexts. In fact, to describe the seriousness with which the Baganda (as well as other indigenous people in Africa) took up Christianity as well as Western education, one missionary in Buganda, metaphorically stated: “The sea will be swept back with greater ease than the Africans from pursuing learning” (as quoted in Furley & Watson 1978: 62).

Statistical figures of the last decade of the nineteenth-century indicate the seriousness with which the indigenous community subscribed to the technology of reading. Furley and Watson have noted that in one week during 1893, over twenty two thousand copies of literature in Luganda were sold by the missionaries including: “730 New Testaments, 970 Gospels and Acts (single volume), 9,550 single Gospels, Acts or Epistles, 344 Prayer Books, 3,746 primers, 5,860 Mateka [sic] Reading Books, and 1,069

hymn books” (ibid: 98). It would be an overstatement to say that most of the Baganda at that time, converted to Christianity because they understood what this new religion was about, but it could arguably be stated that many of them may have been attracted to the unique methods by which Christianity was taught; that is, through the art of reading, the technology of writing, and the material benefits that came with this new religion. These included among others: free textiles, which were distributed by the missionaries to entice the natives to come to Church, access to medical facilities, and opportunities to work at the missions; all of which were made available only to those people who accepted to convert to Christianity.

It should be remembered that at the time of Western intervention, textiles were still scarce, and it was mainly the members of the royal family and the chiefs, who had the means to acquire woven fabrics. C. W. Hattersley commented that it became a common practice for some missionaries to go around villages distributing Western commodities particularly pieces of cloth and needles in order to encourage people to convert to Catholicism (ibid: 221). Further, the converts (especially women) were taught how to make their own garments out of the white fabrics distributed, which they would wear while going to church. Men, on the other hand, received already made garments (white *kanzus*, or shirts). As can be noted, woven fabrics (especially white ones) soon came to be associated with Christianity, literary used by the missionaries to explain several binaries associated with the Christian faith. In the process of evangelisation, white garments were literally used to explain the Christian concept of salvation. Several binaries like “baptism and paganism”, “darkness” and “light”, “hell and heaven” predominantly associated with Christianity were often articulated to the *basomi*

(Christian “readers”) in a way that inscribed in their minds the “sacredness” of the white colour.

In chapter three, it was mentioned that the Baganda have an aesthetic appeal for *kitaka* (brown hue), and the concept of “brownness” governed their interpretation of beauty as well as their cultural productions, many of which were intended both for secular and indigenous religious purposes, as was the case with bark-cloth. Therefore, by introducing a new concept of “whiteness”, which was above all, distinctly associated with Western religion and civilization, was bound to disorientate the Baganda both in their aesthetic and religious values. As I argue, the consequence of the clash between the Western concept of “whiteness” and the indigenous concept of “brownness” brought about a change in attitude of the Baganda commoners towards their self identity and dress, thereby also significantly affecting their symbolic interpretation of bark-cloth. The Baganda were made to think that bark-cloth was an inferior fabric as compared to the imported fabrics (some of which were in fact, structurally of a far lower quality). Whereas it is an undisputable fact that at the time of Western intervention woven fabrics had long been introduced in Buganda by the Arabs, it is noteworthy that the common people, who constitute the majority of Baganda society, regarded imported textiles as a symbol of social stratification, reserved only for members of the royal class, and people of a chiefly status. However, in the wake of Western religious education, it was soon to be discovered that before the “Western God”, all people are alike, so long as they keep their souls as well as their bodies clean, which in this case, was unfortunately interpreted by the missionaries as “white”. It was also demonstrated that ‘true’ religion transcended social and political boundaries, which were often characterized by distinctive material

culture especially textiles. This new ideology, as I contend, obviously posed problems to the appreciation of indigenous fabrics like bark-cloth, which though aesthetically appealing, were not conforming to the tonal prescriptions of the Western missionaries. Consequently, the “clean shirt” or otherwise said, the “white shirt” metaphor became a recurrent theme in the evangelical activities of both the missionaries and their converts, thus contributing significantly to the transformation of the indigenous dress traditions, and thereby contributing to the demise of the Baganda bark-cloth industry in general. By the twentieth-century, woven fabrics, and white ones in particular, came to be more closely linked to Christianity than Islam, a religion of the Swahili-Arabs, who first introduced woven fabrics in Buganda, though of course ‘white’ has the same connotation in Islam, i.e. symbolising ‘purity’. It should also not be forgotten that by emphasizing the “white shirt” theory, the missionaries contributed indirectly to the growth of a lucrative textile market that came to dominate economic activities in Buganda beginning in the second quarter of the twentieth-century.

The discouragement and substitution of local sartorial artefacts was not unique to Buganda because it has been well documented in other regions where Christianity took root. For example, Margaret Jean Hay, an economic-historian, analyses the contribution of Western missionaries and colonial officials to the transformation of the material culture of the Luo people of Seme area of the Kavirondo district of Western Kenya. Hay argues that missionaries and African converts worked actively to influence the adoption of the new forms of clothing in Seme, and for that reason, the early Christian converts came to be known as *io-nanga*, literary translated as “people of cloth”. She further explains that the missionaries (as well as the colonial officials) in Western Kenya agreed

on the preferable form of dress for African men, namely: the *kanzu*, a robe that was already in use in Buganda. Women were encouraged to tie a two-meter length of white cloth (locally referred to as *nanza*) around their necks, under their armpits, or over one shoulder. She further notes that girls accepted at mission schools were taught to sew their own dresses from the fabric given to them, while schoolboys were given ready-made clothes (shirts and shorts) for daily wear, and long white *kanzus* for church services and other Christian ceremonies (1996: 252).

Similarly, examining the history of cloth in Polynesia, Nicholas Thomas argued that “Christianity brought not only new forms of worship and new beliefs; missionaries attempted at least to impose new ideas of work... and a new sense of the body...Sewing [became an] important [handicraft] not only in itself, but because its discipline entailed the new way of being in the world that the missionaries sought to render pervasive” (2003: 84) *through the “school”, which was to become the new avenue for socialization* [emphasis added]. In the next few paragraphs, I analyse how the introduction of secular schools, which provided a confined space for learning purposes, further contributed to the transformation of the symbolic interpretation of bark-cloth and other material culture of the Baganda.

7.3.1 Missionary Secular Schools in Buganda

It was not until 1895, with the arrival of the Roman Catholic missionaries of the Mill Hill Society in England, and the first women CMS workers that there was rapid extension of missionary educational activities in Buganda. The educational contribution of these late arrivals was the separation of secular learning from religious teaching, and

the founding of proper schools. Literacy education remained the focus of village schools that mushroomed in hundreds nationwide. However, in the Catholic pioneer elementary schools, the curriculum comprised of reading, writing and scripture, and gradually English, geography and arithmetic were introduced (Hawes 1970: 180). In addition, some limited vocational training in carpentry, brick making, and printing was offered informally to smaller groups, who were destined to assist the missionaries in the construction of churches, and other necessary infrastructure, and for publication of teaching materials. For several decades, the secular missionary elementary schools offered little in terms of cultural education. Even when C. W. Hattersley, the first trained CMS missionary educationist to arrive in Buganda in 1898, was given the responsibility to design the curriculum for the CMS mission schools, he omitted indigenous arts and technologies like music, dance, drama, poetry, pottery or bark-fabric production and decoration or the fabrication of useful instruments and household objects. In fact, Hattersley's curriculum, which was limited in scope, included the teaching of writing, numerical skills, geography and some limited elementary science (in addition to Bible studies). His curriculum did not differ significantly from that of the pioneer CMS missionaries or that of the Mill Hill Mission, for it crystallized the earlier established relations between education, evangelization and civilization. In an attempt to give justification for the new curriculum, Hattersley stated: "the chief aim is to bring up the pupil in the way of salvation, and then to show him how he [could] use the power so acquired from his [or her] own uplifting and the uplifting of his own nation" (1908: 155). However, to the present researcher, several factors were responsible for this major cultural omission.

Firstly, since their main mission to Buganda was to spread Christianity, the missionaries did not want to encourage the teaching of local arts, which they believed, were a very important means of transmitting “heathen” practices that they [missionaries] had come to fight against. By no means am I implying that the Western missionaries were not aware of the importance of these arts in the preservation of the indigenous culture, and the maintenance of social unity. Instead, I contend that the missionaries opted to watch with caution those disciplines, which were likely to bring into focus the traditional institutions and their associated ideologies. Moreover, as sole agents of European education in Buganda from the 1870s until the 1920s, the missionaries had unlimited powers to decide what to include or discard in the curriculum for native education. Secondly, while it might have been in their interest to teach the Baganda people various aspects of Western education, the European missionaries did not have enough manpower to handle this job effectively given the overwhelming numbers of the new converts who flocked to the mission centres to “read”. Thirdly, and most importantly, just as the Baganda had no knowledge of the European cultural norms and values, similarly the European missionaries were not equipped with the relevant skills that would lead to the improvement of the local arts. Therefore, in such circumstances, the best they could do was to introduce a complete new set of art and technical skills, which they were familiar with, possibly as they had promised Kabaka Muteesa I.⁷ The resultant impact was the substitution of the indigenous arts with foreign craft education in the secular high

⁷ See chapter four on the first missionaries to reach Buganda.

schools⁸, which had been founded in Buganda at the beginning of the twentieth century in order to cater for the children of the chiefs in Buganda, as I discuss below.

7.3.2 Missionary Secular Education and its Contribution to Cultural Transformations in Buganda (1900 -1920s)

The first high schools were established with the aim to train sons and daughters of the chiefs, and other elite members of the Baganda society, who had then become heavily involved in colonial activities to the extent that they had little time to attend to their own children. As Hattersley commented: “the only plan which showed any prospect of success was to get the boys entirely away from their home surroundings and to bring them up in such a way that they would realize their mission in the world... [k]nowing that in the ordinary course of events such boys were destined to become [the] future leaders of the country” (1908: 160-161). Hence in 1902, the Mill Hill Fathers founded their first secular high school for boys at Namilyango, and a year later a similar school for the CMS missionaries was opened at Mengo near the Kabaka’s palace. Having realized that the young elites, destined to become future leaders would certainly require educated girls to marry, the missionaries, with the consent of the Baganda chiefs, established high schools for girls. Taking the lead were the Franciscan Sisters under the leadership of Mother Kevin, who founded three girls’ schools in 1903 at Nsambya, Nnagalama, and Nsuube. Two years later, the CMS missionaries also opened their first girls’ high school at Gayaza, about 12 km away from the royal capital. In 1906, two additional boys’ schools were founded, namely: King’s School Buddo for the CMS, and St. Mary’s College Rubaga, for the Roman Catholics. In the next few paragraphs, I

⁸ These were of a far lower standard than the current high schools. They were comparable to contemporary primary schools in terms of their curriculum.

discuss the type of education offered in these new schools, and how it differed or related to the indigenous system of education earlier discussed in this chapter.

As in the indigenous system of education, the curriculum in the high schools was designed according to the expected roles the students were to play during their adulthood in the emerging modern society; that is to say, based on biological gender differences. Because the boys were expected to become teachers at the mission stations, or to take up minor jobs in the Protectorate Government as clerks, messengers, interpreters, or store keepers (which were essentially white-collar jobs), the curriculum in the boys' schools emphasized literary education (Bible studies, the 3Rs, Geography, and Elementary Science). Arguably, this curriculum had very little in common with the indigenous education the Baganda boys received at home or in their local community, as has been discussed in section 7.2 of in this chapter.

On the other hand, girls were expected to carry on with the “traditional economic role” of women as food providers and administrators of the domestic “ministry” in their families. Thus their curriculum was to a greater extent, informed by the principle of domesticity, which emphasized food crop-cultivation, processing and cooking, as well as handicraft production, and general home care, which were complemented with religious studies and the 3Rs. The overriding philosophy of the girls' education was “hand to mind” because it involved the application of practical methodologies, as a means to address abstract ideologies; that is, from manual work to the alphabet and other basic principles of learning.⁹ This philosophy was clearly explained by Miss A. L. Allen, the first headmistress of Gayaza High School, whose remarks, published in the *Uganda*

⁹ I acknowledge Nakanyike Musisi (1991) for this analysis.

Notes ought to be quoted at length for the benefit of the present discussion. Allen stated that:

Our aim is not to fill the girls' heads with knowledge, as to develop their character and make them good sensible women who are not afraid to work...When we simply fill them with knowledge be it the Bible or Geography or arithmetic, they do not know what to do with it. They can go and glibly tell tale to someone else, but are they educated by it? Have we given them power to cope with this and other secular matters? Are we not rather teaching them to follow a given line blindly than opening their minds to reason for themselves (as quoted in Musisi 1991: 259, 263-264).

In her description of the methodological approach embraced at Gayaza Girls' School, Allen further emphasized that:

We find it well to begin with their capable hands, teaching them handcrafts, and after a time they like them, and [become] industrious over them. To sewing they take at once...Then we teach them the alphabet and other rudiments of learning and encourage them at the same time to bear upon their manual work, the garments they want to make etc. the common sense and even initiative that they will develop over needle work is surprising. We find their minds and their bodies must be educated *pari passim* (ibid: 264).

Whereas it could be argued that as opposed to the boys' education, the girls' curriculum in several respects emulated the indigenous system which principally focused on environmental education, it is also important to note that in general, both the boys' and girls' education did not open up opportunities for the teaching of native arts and craft skills, yet these formed a major component of the indigenous education system. The range of subjects offered as part of cultural education (especially in boys' schools), was very limited in comparison to the indigenous curriculum that exposed the learners to a wide repertoire of practical skills.

As Hattersley, the chief architect of the CMS curriculum stated, in terms of art education, “the boys were taught some drawing, with the idea of giving them something to do in their spare moments while tailoring classes were meant to enable them to learn how to sew their own trousers and other garments” (1908: 172-173). As for the girls in CMS schools, they were introduced to needlework, spinning, lace making, and tailoring (ibid: 198-199), which were typical of girls’ education back in Europe. The curriculum in the Mill Hill Mission schools differed slightly from that of the CMS, for in addition to needlework, the girls were taught some mat making and basket weaving. However, because Gayaza High School was the most prestigious among the four girls’ schools in Buganda because it trained princesses and daughters of the senior administrative chiefs, its curriculum was soon emulated in the rest of the girls’ schools even though it offered much less in terms of cultural education. Victor Murray made a very important observation that perfectly fits the present discussion. Murray states:

...if the aim be to develop people’s sense of the beauty and to provide that ‘joy in work’ of which William Morris spoke, there must come somewhere a relation of the product to the producer. It should be something in which he himself has a share, and which he himself can use and test its workmanship in the using. To make elaborate things for other people and for a purpose beyond any purpose of your own is to make a divorce between art and life. It is to associate what is beautiful with what is alien, and one’s everyday surroundings are still left unredeemed (1967:222).

Nonetheless, because both the missionaries and the native communities acknowledged that Western education, in whichever form, was a necessary factor to social development, schools mushroomed throughout the Protectorate during the first decade of the twentieth-century. Consequently, facilities for inspection, for supply of educational materials and

above all, for the supply of educated and trained teachers proved totally inadequate. There was no centralized system of education; each of the two major Christian denominations administered its own educational affairs. By the end of the first decade of the twentieth-century, the missionaries could no longer cope with the strain of running single-handedly, the education system in Uganda. Thus, in 1912, missionaries called upon the Protectorate government to step in and render the much-needed assistance in the inspection of schools. However, the Protectorate Government, which was at the time, preoccupied with the administrative and economic aspects of the Protectorate, opted to leave the issue of education to the missionaries although it provided some limited annual subsidies to the missions.

I argue that this prolonged failure by the Protectorate administration to participate in the organization, inspection and delivery of education was a contributing factor to the cultural imbalance in the education system that went unchecked. It was the mentality of the colonial officials that the missionaries were best-suited for the job of educating the native community, as indeed one senior colonial official commented while discussing the education policy in the Uganda Protectorate: "Education is certainly our business, but if the missions will do it for us, it may be better to give them the opportunity" (as quoted in Musisi 1991: 259). Nonetheless, this *laissez-faire* attitude by the government officials was destined to change following a conference held in 1918 to discuss the educational matters in the Protectorate, where the missions took the opportunity to remind the government of its failure to partake fully in the affairs of education (Furley & Watson 1978:118).

7.4 Government Intervention in the Education System

Commitment from the Protectorate Government to take direct responsibility in the education system came at the end of the First World War. The Protectorate Government set up a commission to make recommendations as to the best means of advancing the Protectorate's prosperity. The Uganda Development Commission, as it was called, held its first meeting under the chairmanship of T. S. Thomas, the Acting Chief Secretary, on December 2, 1919 and collected views from representatives of the various sectors of society, including among others, Government departments, Europeans involved in plantation agriculture, commercial traders, missionary societies, the Indian community, and representatives of the indigenous people (Ingham 1958: 147). In their report published early in 1920, the Uganda Development Commission emphasized the need for wider educational opportunities for the indigenous people. However, as Ingham has noted, "Although the members of the commission admitted that a general education was always a necessary basis for any society [,] they were opposed to any extensive literary education for the larger part of the African population, maintaining that the most pressing need in Uganda was for technical education to supply the craftsmen required in a developing country" (ibid: 160). Hence, the members of the commission proposed the establishment of a Government Technical School that would train African pupils to work in the various departments including: Medical, Transport, Agriculture, Survey and Public Works. It was envisaged that graduates of the new technical school would eventually replace the more highly paid Asian artisans, and therefore, cut back on Government

expenditure¹⁰ (Furley & Watson 1978: 188). As a result of these recommendations by the Uganda Development Commission, the Protectorate Government finally acknowledged its responsibility in order to improve the standard of education in Uganda.

Government intervention precipitated change in the education system that contributed directly or indirectly to further cultural transformations in Buganda. In 1921, the Protectorate Government opened up a technical school at Makerere, on the outskirts of Kampala in Kyaddondo County, headed by O. Savile. At its infancy, the Government Native Technical School, as it was named, was to offer courses in clerical, telegraphy, carpentry, education and engineering, which had been proposed by the Uganda Development Commission of 1919- 1920, as crucial and necessary for the development of the Protectorate. A year later, the school was renamed Makerere College. Though it carried the status of a “College” the standards at Makerere were by no means significantly beyond those of a secondary school although it was envisaged that with time, Makerere would become an important centre of education in the Protectorate. I will come back to the educational importance of Makerere College at a later stage.

Following Government intervention in the provision and supervision of education in the Protectorate, several sections of the community began to display an increasing interest in the education scheme. The missionary system of education soon came under direct criticism; several people including the indigenous community started to express more openly their discontent about the low standards in the mission schools. Most significantly was the Young Baganda Association (YBA) that launched a public appeal for the introduction of government schools, and for financial support to enable some of

¹⁰ It should be noted that the government was spending a substantive amount of money on the Indian artisans and coolies, whom it recruited since 1895 to carry out various technical activities in the Protectorate.

its members to travel abroad in order to attain more 'decent' education. YBA had been set up in 1915 by the sons of the *bakungu* (ruling chiefs). Many of its members were graduates of King's College Buddo, then serving in the government as clerks and interpreters. One major objective of the YBA was to promote the well being of the native society, and was particularly concerned with matters relating to education in Buganda.¹¹ Members of this association had in December 1919 presented their views to the Reverend C. F. Andrews (most likely a member of the Uganda Development Commission) stating:

Uganda...is in a very bad need of education to enable her people to meet modern affairs. The present schools we have in Uganda are under the management of missionaries whom we thank very much but the standard of these schools is very low. It is so low that one who leaves these schools after having obtained a first certificate hardly gets any job in offices... Therefore Sir we entreat you to see your way to recommend us for high education and this can only be done when government schools are introduced in Uganda (as cited in Low 1971:52).

Although their action was criticized in some European quarters, their public appeal was indicative of the need for government intervention not only at the higher level but rather, right from the lower levels of education. Apparently, other Europeans shared a similar view with that of the YBA; a situation that compelled Sir Geoffrey Archer, the then Governor of the Uganda Protectorate, to invite Eric J. Hussey, Chief Inspector of Schools in the Sudan, to assess the educational needs of the Uganda Protectorate.

Hussey undertook his duties in 1924 and submitted his report in August of the same year. As Furley & Watson have reported, Hussey's report revealed that the

¹¹ The YBA was also interested in matters of trade. They were critical of the non-African monopolization of the economy, and thus called for free trade, which was a necessary measure for the welfare of the native community. The 1901 Trade Licensing Act had given all the powers of trade to the non-African community, particularly of Indian origin, and the indigenous Baganda (and others) were restricted to crop cultivation. For more details see Mamdani 1996, Chapter six 'Formation of the Petty Bourgeoisie': 147-188).

Protectorate Government was required to do more than simply subsidizing mission schools, which were only targeting children of the chiefs and a few elite members of society. Instead, the report recommended that the Protectorate Government should put in place a system of general education for the masses. Hussey's report further underlined that "such education should be 'based on the customary life of the ordinary peasant', and further training should be geared to the needs of the colonial and native administrations" (1978:188).

During the same year, the American based Phelps- Stokes Charitable Trust, which was touring tropical Africa to investigate and report on the conditions of native education in the colonies, happened to be in British East Africa (Kenya). The aim of the Phelps-Stokes Charitable Trust was to encourage more and better education, and to promote, directly or indirectly, interracial relations in the colonies (Jones 1925: xiii). Thus, Sir Geoffrey Archer, Governor of the Uganda Protectorate at that time, took the opportunity and invited them to give an expert view about the state of education in the Uganda Protectorate. The recommendations of the Phelps-Stoke Commission were shocking as it was revealed that the general standards of education in the Uganda Protectorate were in urgent need of 'salvation'.

First, the commission noted that the missionaries had not been particularly keen enough to adopt pedagogical methodologies that were directly relevant to the needs of the native community namely: "knowledge of hygiene, soil cultivation, animal husbandry, village industry, healthful recreation and care of the home" (Jones 1925: 155-156). However, the views of the commission were not entirely accurate, especially in light of the curriculum in the boys' and girls' high schools, which provided practical approaches

to education. However, the problem was that the curriculum lacked an indigenous “touch”, which the committee sought to be addressed. As they commented: “The type of education has been exclusively too literary” (ibid: 162). *In other words, the curriculum was discordant with the socio-cultural realities in the Protectorate* (emphasis added). Nonetheless, members of the commission were to a greater extent satisfied with girls’ education, which was essentially of a practical nature but they expressed serious concern about the overall education system in the Protectorate.

Therefore, the commission called for a radical supplementation of the school curriculum to include courses that were more suited to the local environment. It was envisaged that through this policy of ‘educational adaptation’, the indigenous technological and cultural achievements of the native society could be regenerated to provide a context for socio-cultural developments in the Protectorate. Further, the Commission, in concurrence with Hussey’s recommendations, called for greater government involvement in the inspection and delivery of education in the Protectorate. It recommended the establishment of a Department of Education to coordinate the disjointed educational efforts by the various mission societies in the Protectorate, and to create a post of Government Inspector of schools to assist in the supervisory work.

Findings of the Phelps Stokes Commission were not unique to the Uganda Protectorate because similar reports had been made elsewhere in Sub-Saharan Africa, where the commission had earlier carried out investigations during 1923 and 1924. Hence, the publication of the Phelps Stokes report prompted a radical change in the British colonial policy in Africa, resulting in the appointment of a Director of Education in Uganda (as was the case with other British territories in Africa), and to the creation, in

1924, of the Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies, to coordinate all matters relating to curriculum policy. The most significant outcome of these educational commissions was a memorandum on *Educational policy in British tropical Africa* drawn and published by the Advisory Committee in 1925. The memorandum, under its fourth section, sub-headed “Adaptation to Native Life” declared:

Education should be adapted to the mentality, aptitudes, occupations and traditions of the various peoples, conserving as far as possible all sound and healthy elements in the fabric of their social life; adapting them where necessary to changed circumstances and progressive ideas, as an agent of natural growth and evolution. Its aim should be to render the individual more efficient in his or her condition of life, whatever it may be, and to promote the advancement of the community as a whole through improvement of agriculture, the development of native industries, the improvement of health, the training of the people in the management of their own affairs, and the inculcation of the true ideals of citizenship and service” (as quoted in Sanyal 2001: 44).

Logically enough, in the same year, Sir Geoffrey Archer, seconded Hussey to become the first Director so that he may put into effect the recommendations of his own investigations as well as those of the Phelps-Stokes Commission.

Hussey’s immediate task was to restructure the educational system at all levels. He started by setting up an advisory council on native education, which comprised of representatives of the missions in Uganda, the Kabaka or his nominee, the four provincial commissioners, two other officials, and one ordinary person appointed by the Buganda Provincial Council. In his five-year development plan, which was adopted the following year, Hussey proposed other educational development strategies that included among others, a building programme, revision of syllabuses, and re-grading of the schools into four categories. In ascendant order, the educational pyramid was to be constructed as

follows: i) sub-grade village schools, where the pupils were taught for two years to read, write, and master a little arithmetic as a qualification for Christian baptism; ii) elementary vernacular schools, giving a four years' course in the 3 R's with supplementary basic training in hygiene, agriculture and handwork; iii) intermediate schools (middle and junior secondary level) offering a six year-programme, at the end of which, pupils would take the leaving certificate examination, which was the necessary requirement for entrance to Makerere College, and finally: iv) central schools¹², which acted as finishing schools for those pupils who were not likely to benefit from higher education provided at Makerere College.

Alongside the above school hierarchical structure were special schools offering agricultural, technical education, and normal schools that catered for the training of teachers to be dispatched to the village and elementary schools. In 1930, two mission finishing schools (Buloba College for the CMS, and another college at Nkokonjeru for the Mill Hill Mission) were opened for the wives and daughters of prominent chiefs and wealthy members of the Baganda society (Uganda Report 1930: 34). Because the purpose of these schools was to train women and girls in general family management, the syllabus included domestic science, needlework and hygiene, and English, music and painting were additional subjects (Furley & Watson 1978: 196). Finally, at the apex, was Makerere College, a Government institution of a higher type of education, offering courses in medicine (training medical assistants), agriculture, survey, teacher-training, telegraphy, general vocational subjects, mechanics, carpentry, engineering, clerical skills

¹² The six-year programme covered the syllabus at elementary level, as well as preliminary studies at the intermediate level, with English taught in the last two years.

and veterinary.¹³ The new system of education was legalized in the Education Ordinance of 1927, and district boards of education were set up to administer the schools while the government was to take charge of the school inspection process. Nonetheless, missionaries retained full control over the delivery of education and were to receive more funding from the Protectorate Government.

Whereas tremendous effort was invested in the restructuring of the education system to suit the adaptation policy, it was to take several decades before the cultural imbalance in the education system was to be addressed. Significant effort was channelled into promoting agricultural education as the learners were introduced to new methods of farming, and every school was required to set up a garden for demonstration purposes. Within a few years, the school garden became an essential feature in all schools in the Protectorate. However, very limited attention was given to the cultural subjects. The curriculum in the arts thus continued to be superficial. The Colonial Reports of the Uganda Protectorate of the early to mid-1930s furnish us with the necessary evidence to this effect.

For example, in relation to the visual arts, the 1931 Report, and the subsequent ones published during the mid-thirties reveal that: “Apart from the ordinary school lessons in drawing, little attempt [was] made to give instruction in the graphic arts, and there [was] no society to encourage the development of local art” (1931: 34). The disinterestedness in the local arts can be analysed from a broader perspective by considering other cultural fields like music, dance, drama and poetry. Although some limited attempt had been made to introduce music and drama in some high schools, the

¹³ For additional details see Colonial Reports on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Uganda Protectorate 1927-1932.

problem was that the music practice was restricted to Western Church hymns, and the drama classes replicated Western plays. According to the Colonial Report of 1932, Hans Andersen's 'The Nightingale' was a popular play performed by the senior boys at King's College Buddo on their speech days, while the pupils at the junior level performed 'The Pied Piper'. Similarly, in the girls' schools nativity plays were performed, and all the dresses and stage equipment were carefully prepared by the pupils as part of their handwork classes, as was especially the case at Gayaza Girls' School. In addition, Shakespearean plays, which were purportedly most difficult for the indigenous pupils, became more popular at the Mill Hill Mission Seminary at Nyenga, staged predominantly for the European audience (1932: 35-36).

However, with the arrival of Sir Philip Mitchell as the new Governor in 1935, it was envisaged that the cultural factor in the education system was to be re-addressed. In his statement, Mitchell mentioned that "A sound educational development rooted in the soil of the country and the lives and traditions of its people is essential to enable them to become part of the civilization of the modern world" (as quoted in Furley & Watson, 1978: 200). Nevertheless, despite Mitchell's initial enthusiasm, the overall cultural imbalance in the schools was not to change as long as there was no evidence of a conscious plan put in place to cultivate a sense of awareness among the educationists and the learners, of the diversity and wealth of local cultures, or a plan to apply them as a valuable heritage and resource, in the modern system of education. As it so happened, the school syllabuses continued to replicate courses from schools in Britain, an educational approach that was apparently supported by Mitchell, irrespective of his earlier ambitions to *indigenize* the education system. At the Inter-territorial conference held at Makerere in

May 1938, to examine the steps to be taken to improve the quality of higher education.

Mitchell backed this educational transplant stating:

But there is only one civilization and one culture to which we are fitted to lead the people of these countries--our own: we know no other and we cannot dissect the one we know and take out this piece or that as being good or bad for Africans...We British are Christian people, ourselves the product of the Christian schools and colleges of our native land and the only civilization and culture we know is Christian...Our task, indeed, if we have any faith in our civilization and ourselves is boldly to lead the African peoples forward along the road we ourselves are following, confident that if we do that we shall have discharged our duty as guardians for them and shall have set them upon courses which as they march onwards in the generations to come, will bring them even closer to us and to the things in which we believe (as quoted in Kyeyune 2003: 40-41).

Against this background, it could possibly be argued that chances for the establishment of indigenous arts and other cultural subjects on the school curriculum were slipping farther away into the oblivion.

7.5 Trowell's Initiative towards Promoting Indigenous Art Education

A more significant visual cultural turn was to be realized in the late 1930s with the arrival of Margaret Trowell, a young yet highly enthusiastic British artist and art educator, who was quick to recognize and appreciate the immense cultural diversity in the Uganda Protectorate. Trowell was educated at St. Paul's Girls school in Hammersmith before she joined the London University Slade School of Art, where she trained as a painter between 1924 and 1926, under the instruction of Prof. Tonks. She later undertook a course in art education at the Institute of Education in the same University (1926-1927), and thereafter, taught art to children in a private school in Kensington for one year (1927-28) before she set off for Africa. As Elsbeth Court has

noted, “By the time she was a young adult, travel, art and Christianity were integral themes in Trowell’s life” (1985:36). Her passion for travel developed right from childhood, out of expansive exposure to maps and other tourist information in her father’s shop ‘The Map Shop’ on St. James Street in London. Thus, while at the University College London, she joined the Student Christian Movement, wherein was a small group, the ‘East Africa Group’, which was interested in helping development work in East Africa. There, she subsequently met and married her husband Hugh Trowell, a medical student from St, James’ Hospital, whose career in Medical Service was destined to lead the duo to East Africa, and thus enabled her to realize her dreams of art and travel.

During her art education training, Trowell was heavily inspired by her tutor, Marion Richardson, whose innovative pedagogical approaches encouraged freedom of artistic expression, characterized by unlimited use of colour and design. These, she was soon to find useful and applicable, when she and her husband relocated to Uganda in 1935, where Hugh Trowell had been transferred to the Uganda Medical Services to teach medicine at Makerere Medical School. Before coming to Uganda, the Trowells had spent a few years amongst the Kamba people of Ukamba Province in Western Kenya, where Hugh Trowell worked as a Medical Assistant. There, Margaret Trowell was exposed to the vitality in indigenous pattern and design inherent in African art. Thus on arrival in Uganda in 1935, she immediately set out to explore the multi-ethnic cultural terrain of the Uganda Protectorate, starting with the activities of the Royal Craftsmen of the Kabaka of Buganda. Out of her strong conviction that the indigenous arts indeed had a role to play in modern education, Trowell decided to learn more about the different art traditions of Uganda, which apparently had for several decades been ignored and or suppressed by

many of her Western counterparts. The ethnographic research among various traditions, as I discuss shortly, formed a basis for several of her publications that were to be used in the teaching of art and design in secondary schools in East Africa.

In her biography, Trowell recalled that during her stay in Kenya “[She] never saw or heard of any African who was taught in the schools painting, sculpture or any handcraft beyond elementary carpentry, and building” (1981: 2). The absence of art education on the native school curriculum in Kenya was a result of the racially constructed and mistaken assumption by the colonial administrators that art was not a necessary requirement in African education. In Uganda, however, the situation was slightly different because by the time of her arrival, domestic science, handicraft and some limited painting formed an essential part of the girls’ education. Moreover, some limited practical work with a smattering of drawing, had already been introduced in the predominantly literary curriculum for boys. There were also indications of some painting classes in the finishing schools, established in the 1930, for wives and daughters of prominent chiefs (Furley & Watson 1978: 196). However, what was boldly lacking was the integration of indigenous arts into the school curriculum, which undoubtedly, Trowell did not fail to recognize at the outset upon her arrival in Uganda.

Because it was clear in her mind that art in general, but more so, indigenous art in particular, is a vital instrument of education as well as religion, Trowell decisively brought this issue to the attention of the stakeholders in the Uganda Protectorate. Her strong determination to advocate for the introduction of indigenous arts in schools (largely run by Western missionaries) compelled her to write her maiden book, *African Arts and Crafts: Their Development in the School*, published in 1937 and prefaced by H.

Jowitt, then Director of Education in the Uganda Protectorate, and former Director of Native Development in Southern Rhodesia (present day Zimbabwe). This publication was mainly based on her earlier research carried out in the Kenyan Colony; however, given the fact that Trowell involved such top officials in the colonial administration, as Jowitt, in her educational ventures, is indicative of her strong determination to wage a battle for the introduction of indigenous art education on the modern school curriculum. With full knowledge that the missionaries played a vital role in the education system of the Uganda Protectorate, and that the spread of Christianity continued to be their main goal, Trowell stated:

Art is absolutely necessary to religion. It is necessary as an expression of the feelings of the worshippers, and it is necessary as an instrument of education. It is far more important in the education of a child or convert ...because it appeals to our subconscious emotions which lie deeper than our rational mind. [However] [t]he only art which easily moves a people is its own... It needs courage to scrap the traditional English Church ornament and symbolism and allow the African to find his own, yet anything else is artificial to him, for the people's art is, and always must be, in the vernacular (1937: 16).

Despite being a new arrival, she took courage to educate her fellow Westerners engaged in the teaching of art (though mainly in form of handicrafts) in schools about the need to appreciate the African aesthetic, even though it was in many respects, incongruous to Western principles of art. She noted:

But if we are taking seriously the problem of helping the African towards richness of life through art, we have got to try to think ourselves into his place and appreciate with him beauty in the form in which he sees it; and the first thing we have to do...is to delve into our own minds and sift all the prejudices and traditions and associated ideas out of which we form an opinion of the value of a work of art...the choice of what is and what is not beautiful is so wrapt up in our upbringing and general likes and

dislikes that we must be very slow in condemning or even approving the art of a people of an entirely different background by our own standards; rather we should try to understand and appreciate their standards...There is certainly no need to foist our own conventions, such as perspective, on them in the name of art; rather we should show them the best we can of forms of art more akin to their own, such as peasant pottery, good weaving, medieval carving, and so on; and, what is even more important, by collecting and encouraging the best that we can find in their own art, teach them to have a pride in it instead of despising it as a thing of the past, which is their chief danger to-day (ibid: 17, 28-29).

In the next section, I discuss Trowell's contribution to the introduction of indigenous art education in schools in Uganda, and the controversial pedagogical methodologies she applied when she founded her own art school presently named, "The Margaret Trowell School of Industrial and Fine Arts" (MTSIFA). A discussion on the history of MTSIFA, which I will here refer to as Makerere Art School, is vital to the current research because it enables us to articulate more clearly the process of transformation in the design, role, and meaning of the cultural artefacts of the Baganda, with specific focus on bark-cloth. For purposes of clarity, the history of the art school and that of Makerere University has been dealt with concurrently.

7.6 Founding of Makerere Art School

At the time of Trowell's arrival in Uganda (1935), Makerere was well on its way to becoming a fully established and leading centre for higher education; not only for the Uganda Protectorate, but for the entire East African region. The changes in the structure of education in the Protectorate, which also resulted in the founding of Makerere College, came about after Government had been challenged to provide academic education that would enable the indigenous population to participate more actively in the administration

of the Protectorate. Through their Association (Young Baganda Association), some youths in Buganda had urged the Protectorate Government to intervene in the provision of education arguing that the education offered in the mission schools was of a very low standard. It should also be remembered that some members of the Association had already established contact with some African-American universities in the Southern States of the USA, and thus it was feared that allowing the flow of indigenous students into America would be politically detrimental because these students were likely to pick up political ideologies that would be damaging to the British Colonial Administration. In a memorandum on higher education in Uganda, dated 30 June 1922, Sir Robert Coryndon, then Governor of the Uganda Protectorate expressed this fear stating:

I think we may be able to prevent young men going abroad for education, at any rate to Alabama, for the next two or three years but each year will become more difficult, and there will come a time when we shall no longer be able to do so. We must if possible, anticipate this time by providing an advanced course of study locally (as quoted in Tiberondwa 1978:114).

Hence, to avert the above situation, Makerere College was founded in that same year. Further efforts to eradicate the flow of Ugandan students to the United States were realized in 1927, when purely technical courses (with the exception of engineering) were withdrawn from Makerere and transferred to another site on Kampala Hill, in order to create space for more academic education at the college.

However, concrete efforts to turn Makerere into an institution of higher learning were to be realized with the arrival of Sir Philip Mitchell in 1935 (the year when the Trowells arrived in Uganda). Mitchell was enthusiastic about the future of education in

the Protectorate, and more so, about the potential of Makerere to become a regional centre of education. In a speech he made at the College that same year, Mitchell stated:

Makerere is now a school. But it is a school which may have a great future, a future as the centre of higher education for the East African group of territories. ... Such a centre is a necessity for East Africa... a centre which may become an integral part of the life of Uganda and its neighbouring territories; a place where there shall be provision alike for the sons of the greatest of the land and the poorest, and from where they may go out every year ... imbued with the true ideas of the civilization for which we [the British colonial administrators] are today the trustees (as cited in Furley and Watson 1978:194).

Mitchell's enthusiasm was translated into action when he requested the Colonial Office to set up a commission to look into the needs of higher education in East Africa. The commission was officiated in 1936, chaired by Earl De La Warr, the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies.¹⁴ In their report submitted in 1937, members of the De la Warr Commission made several recommendations, which were to change the course of education but most significantly, which provided the basis for the elevation of Makerere to a University status, destined to serve the entire region of East Africa.

First, the commission proposed the establishment of a new higher college at Makerere, which at a later stage would then become a university college. The existing college, as it was suggested, was to become an ordinary secondary school (the first government secondary school). Second, the existing secondary schools (which were all mission-owned) were to be upgraded to the standard of a Cambridge School Certificate and it was proposed that the syllabus ought to be more suited to African conditions. It was noted that girls' education was of a very low standard, superficial and out of touch

¹⁴ Other members included Dr. Murray, Principal of Exeter University, Dr. Kerr, founder and Principal of Fort Hare College in South Africa, and Z. K. Mathews, an African graduate of the same college and member of its staff (Furley and Watson 1978:202).

with reality even though it was comparatively better than in other East African territories. Hence the committee proposed the appointment of a Director of Women's Education although they recognized the fact that the root problem was the low enrolment of girls, which by 1935 was placed at 10%. Third, re-classification and simplification of the school structure was proposed whereby what were originally sub-grade, elementary, lower middle, upper-middle, central, and junior secondary schools were to be re-categorized into two levels namely; primary and secondary schools. The main features of the central school curriculum were to be incorporated into the revised school system such that practical courses including agriculture, rural education, and handicraft would be emphasized both at primary as well as secondary levels of education. Fourth, the committee noted the need to improve the standards in teacher training institutions and thus recommended that refresher courses be organized frequently to afford teachers the opportunity to improve their skills. Further, because Makerere passed out very few teachers as compared to the numbers required, it was proposed that graduate teachers be recruited from England especially to teach in the secondary schools. Last but not least, the De La Warr commission recommended that East African governments should declare their policy on recruitment of natives with secondary and post-secondary qualifications as a guarantee that they would be absorbed in the civil service. These changes were to take effect beginning in 1938 (as cited in Furley and Watson, 1978: 202- 204).

As it so happened, during the same year 1936, having read in the *BBC Listener*, an account of Kenneth Murray's exhibition of the work of his art students in Nigeria, Trowell was inspired to set up a similar art school in Uganda.¹⁵ In a shrewd move, she contacted D. Tomblings, Principal of Makerere College and offered to start an

¹⁵ Like Trowell, Murray was a graduate of the London University Slade School of Fine Art.

experimental class to teach painting once a week, to a few students at the college. However, at that time, the college did not have enough facilities to accommodate her intended art programme, but the lack of facilities at the college was by no means going to deter Trowell's ambition. She offered to conduct informal art classes at the veranda of her house at Mulago Hill, overlooking Makerere College; a suggestion which, Tomblings accepted. Three students turned up on the first Wednesday, and the ball was set rolling for what was to become the background for the first art school in Uganda and East Africa. As she explained in her biography, at each session she encouraged students "to paint an imaginative scene, such as 'a hut on fire at night' or 'the drought'. At the end of each session, I would show them reproductions of the art of Greece, the Middle Ages or Asia, likewise pictures [of] indigenous African carvings and patterns, largely derived from West Africa or Zaire [present Democratic Republic of Congo]" (1981: 3).

About the same time, another European, Geraldine Fisher, had undertaken parallel efforts to introduce painting at Gayaza High School. Thus in 1937, the duo decided to organize an exhibition showing the artworks of their pioneer students. The show was mounted in the Synod Hall at Nnamirembe Cathedral, and was opened by Sir Philip Mitchell, Governor of Uganda, who also proposed to have the show restaged in London together with a collection of indigenous crafts, and offered to ask the Legislative Council to finance this venture. Thus, Mitchell's idea of a travel exhibition opened the gates for Trowell to explore the full extent and vitality of indigenous art traditions nationwide. In the months that followed, she travelled to different regions of the Protectorate collecting representative artefacts of high quality, to be included in the London exhibition, which

was to be held in April of the following year at the Imperial Institute in South Kensington.

It also happened that during this period the Protectorate administrators considered a proposal to revive the Uganda Museum earlier set up at Kampala hill in 1907 by the then Governor, Hesketh Bell, in order to preserve all articles of historical, ethnographical and industrial interest, which were representative of the fast-fading cultural traditions of the native society. However, as the Protectorate Government became more involved in projects associated with economic development, it lost grip on matters relating to cultural preservation and development. Consequently, due to lack of care and funding, the museum degenerated to a sorry state. Hence, out of concern, by Sir Philip Mitchell, a committee was established to provide the necessary assistance in re-organizing the museum, to which Margaret Trowell volunteered to serve. For the next six years, Trowell was to serve as a part-time honorary curator until 1945 when after three interim directors, Klaus Waschsman was appointed as full time curator for the museum in 1948. As Kyeyune has explicitly stated, “Trowell’s interest in the new administration of the museum was three fold: a) she wanted to expand the museum collection, and create a fair representation of objects from all parts of the country for the information of whoever had an interest in local cultures; b) she wanted to expand her own knowledge of the local cultures; and c) she wanted to help [the indigenous societies in the Uganda Protectorate to] take pride in their past achievements, so that their future could be built on a ground with roots in the past” (2003:53).

Following the construction of new buildings for Makerere College, the ethnographic collection was in 1942 relocated from Kampala Hill, into one of the old

blocks that had fallen vacant. Again, in her shrewdness Trowell did not hesitate to grab the opportunity to apply for space at the college for her fast growing art class. With the support of George Turner, the new principle of the college, who succeeded Tomblings, space was allocated in the classroom blocks adjacent to the museum. Thus, the art school and the museum kept in close proximity to each other until 1951 when the latter was transferred to its permanent structure at Kamwokya. Three crucial questions thus arise that are pertinent to the scope of this study namely: i) of what significance was the ethnographic collection to the development of a new art tradition in Uganda? ii) In what ways and to what extent did this new form of artistic expression project the indigenous cultural values especially those of the Baganda? iii) In what ways and to what extent was the role and meaning of bark-cloth negotiated as a result of the visual cultural transformations that transpired at Makerere Art School? The above questions can be addressed by investigating more closely, Trowell's teaching methodology, which I present in the next section.

7.6.1 Margaret Trowell's Teaching Strategy (1940s -1950s)

Although she continued zealously to indulge in the collection of cultural artefacts as well as documenting the indigenous technologies, in reality, when it came to conducting her own art classes, Trowell did not succeed in reconciling indigenous traditions and methods of work with modern creative practice. Contrary to her publications where she advocated the teaching of indigenous arts and crafts, Trowell came up with a new and radical approach that promoted the study of figurative art in

form of Painting and Sculpture, an aesthetic that was barely known in the traditions of the Baganda, and among other ethnic societies in Uganda and East Africa in general.

To begin with, Trowell had a strong conviction that Africans have a kind of aesthetic intuition, which if nurtured, could generate new forms of artistic expression. Secondly, she strongly believed that the African creativity would thrive if anchored on a Christian background that had already been set by the early Western missionaries. Hence, logically, by drawing inspiration from the interconnectedness between art and religion that characterized the art of the Middle Ages, Trowell set the warp upon which her art educational endeavours at Makerere were to be interwoven. However, the complexity in Trowell's teaching strategy was that she sought to uphold her Christian values while at the same time hoping to develop an African art genre; the success of which, was paradoxically to be contingent on indigenous resources, yet these were at the time, largely subdued by the forces of Westernization, and regarded generally, to be in contrast to the Christian values. As she argued, "But art was something that mattered, something that had got to be put back into African life" (1958: 108).

In order to circumvent the situation, she encouraged her students to paint and sculpt artworks based on subjects derived from Western religious themes. These, they interpreted and presented within the limits of their imagination, and their cultural experience. Among the popular religious subjects were those related to the life of Christ including among others, 'Dying on the Cross', 'Cleansing of the Temple', 'Healing the Sick', 'Nativity', 'Discipleship' and 'Crucifixion'. Secular subjects which encompassed a descriptive style representing huts, traps, canoes, and other apparatus used in daily life were also attempted. By so doing, Trowell made use of "foreign means" in order to

achieve an “African end”, to borrow Sunanda Sanyal’s expression (2001: 3). Indeed, her educational approach resonated with the views of Lord Hailey, who opened the Art and Craft travel exhibition in London in 1939. As Hailey stated:

Though it is difficult to be certain exactly what form of guidance should be given by those who set themselves to instruct people so different from ourselves, it is clear that we should not satisfy the African’s desire for self-expression if we merely set out to teach him to imitate our own culture. I think that we should give to the African all that we have in our experience—the principles of art, the use of material, and the like, but that we should leave him as far as possible to express the African spirit in the product. We may then establish in time a true African tradition of Art (as quoted in Trowell 1958:106).

However, Trowell was soon to realize that her educational strategy did not leave much room for the students to make use of the cultural artefacts in the national museum collection as a resource material, as she had earlier anticipated.¹⁶ Hence, having failed to reconcile indigenous arts within her painting and sculpture curriculum, Trowell set up a parallel course in handicrafts, and in 1944, Paul Wandera was employed to assist her in the running of this programme. At a parallel level, through her publications, Trowell continued to advocate the teaching of arts and crafts in the schools stressing the desirability of building on existing African traditions. In a few instances, Trowell attested to the negative impact of Western civilization on indigenous culture. In her 1940 publication entitled ‘The Development of Art and Indigenous Crafts in Uganda’ Trowell made the following remarks, which I ought to quote at length for the benefit of this discussion. Trowell stated:

It is a significant fact that although we claim to have brought here with us a higher civilization, the result of our contact has been to lower the

¹⁶ Trowell strongly believed that being within close proximity to the art school, the cultural collection in the national museum would in itself provide a setting for her students’ creative practice.

traditional standards of order and beauty in many of the material possessions of African life. ...More permanent building materials, while bringing the possibility of cleaner and more hygienic housing, have practically killed the old Buganda art of decorative reedwork which had reached a very high standard, and replaced it to a large extent by tumbledown sheds of mouldering brick and corrugated iron. Old petrol tins take the place of well-made water pots, their ragged remnants being afterwards discarded to rust at the roadside; while the cast-off hat, torn relic of shirt and shorts, which has become the everyday dress of poorer peasant and town dweller is certainly no improvement on a well-made barkcloth. ...Cheap imported cloth, enamel ware and tools are rapidly taking the place of local made goods, so that in few years it is highly probable that few local craftsmen will remain; and they, being uneducated peasants away from contact with the modern life of the towns, will be incapable of adapting their art to modern conditions and so giving it the chance of survival... it is not yet too late to preserve a certain amount of this fast, disappearing culture, [that is to say,] through the study of it and the appreciation of its traditional forms... (1940: 76).

While Trowell lacked the necessary experience to integrate indigenous education within her new art programme at Makerere, one can give a benefit of doubt that she was committed to popularizing the teaching of local handicrafts in schools, and also restoring pride in the past cultural traditions. By 1940, “art [had become] an optional major subject in the College Higher Arts Certificate course, which together with an equivalent course on the science side comprised the general non-professional qualifications obtainable through the College (Trowell 1958: 107).

In the period between 1945 and 1958, Makerere College in general, and the Art School in particular, experienced drastic changes. It should be recalled that shortly before the Second World War, the Colonial Office had reached a decision that all African University Colleges be affiliated to London Universities, as a means to improve the general standards of higher education in the British African colonies. Under this new Special Relationship Scheme, as it was referred to, Makerere University College was to

be affiliated to the University of London. These changes were delayed until the end of the war period. Thus in 1949, discussions in relation to the affiliation of Makerere with London University resumed. However, because the University of London had no provision for Fine Arts as a subject in its Arts programme, it was not going to be possible to include the Makerere Art School in this new relationship. Thus the unclear status of the Art School in the Makerere – London University Special Relation Scheme posed a major challenge to Trowell; a situation that prompted her to revise her teaching philosophy, and the overall objectives of the Art School in order to secure it a recognizable status within the University.

Of utmost importance, was the need to convince the University authorities and Government officials as well as the public that art could make a positive contribution to social development, but more so that its teaching ought to be based within the University community, which formed the centre for academic-learning.¹⁷ As she states “ I ...had to [make] educationalists, museums and other Government departments, publishers, textile printers, and the rest, feel they really needed our products; and I hoped to goodness that nobody would call my bluff before I had created the necessary demand” (ibid: 109). Whereas, the Art School was eventually allowed to remain operational within the University College campus, Trowell was still perturbed by the fact that the Art School offered a local certificate at the end of the three- year course while students in other departments at Makerere (who spent a similar period at Makerere) attained London University degrees. Besides, the Art School was not attracting students of a sufficiently high academic calibre.

¹⁷ Some officials had proposed that the Art School be transferred to Kampala Technical School.

Consequently, in 1950, she consulted Sir William Coldstream, a Slade Professor of Fine Art on the possibilities of establishing its roots in the African traditions. Prof. Coldstream proposed that Trowell should come up with the course outline for her proposed diploma course and made a commitment, on behalf of the Slade School (and his own), to render the necessary professional assistance, especially by providing external examiners for the final-year diploma students. After presenting her plans to the Academic Board at Makerere, Maurice de Sausmarez, Head of the Department of Fine Art at the University of Leeds was invited through the Inter-University Council, to give advice on the setting up of the new Diploma course in Fine Art. Firstly, de Sausmarez strongly recommended the establishment of a Diploma in Fine Art, and the development of new courses (in addition to painting, sculpture and a few handicrafts which were being offered). Secondly, he urged the teaching of art and design to a professional level beyond that required by those students who were intending to become art teachers, but the Art Teachers' Certificate course designed to train art and craft teachers for junior and intermediate secondary schools was to be maintained. Thirdly, he proposed that the school be given an independent status from the Faculty of Arts, having its own Board of Studies, and suggested the transfer of the school to larger premises to cater for the new courses and the likely increase in the student population, and also proposed recruitment of staff in the subject specialized subject areas.

As a result of these recommendations, in 1953, the Art School was moved into bigger and better buildings, and the new Fine arts Diploma programme became effective beginning in the Academic year 1954-1955. In the four-year diploma course (leading to a Makerere qualification), students were exposed to the various art and design disciplines

including painting and drawing, sculpture and pottery, textile and graphic design, together with some study of History of Art. However, during their last two years, students were allowed to specialize in one main and one subsidiary subject. With the desire to equate the standards of the Fine diploma course with that offered in British colleges, instructional methodology was shifted from experimental approaches to more professional training with emphasis on development of technique. It was during this period that the pedestrian indigenous craft courses were finally discarded.

It also happened that about the same period, a team of representatives from the Lancashire cotton industry visited East Africa to assess the future market for their goods in this region. During their tour in Uganda, the team was taken to Makerere Art School where they saw some interesting textile designs by the students, which were inspired from local cultural motifs. Consequently, they extended an invitation to Trowell to visit their headquarters in Manchester to discuss a possible professional link between the art school and the Calico Printers Association (CPA). At the conference, the directors agreed to buy a number of designs regularly each year from Makerere Art School, to be put on the market under the trade name of 'Makerere Prints'. It is also claimed that similar business offers were extended to the Art School from the United States.¹⁸ Henceforth, Makerere Art School came into the lime light as her students were from time to time, commissioned to undertake various art and design projects for Government and for the local and international companies. For health reasons, Trowell retired in 1958, having secured the future for Makerere Art School within the University, and having

¹⁸ See Minutes of the School of Art, of 1953.

successfully convinced the public about the importance of art education in social and economic development. She was succeeded by Cecil Todd in 1959.

Trowell's educational endeavours were influential in two respects; first she trained the first generation of East African¹⁹ art teachers, who later undertook the responsibility to pass on the visual traditions and aesthetic values of local cultural products to the young generation entrusted in their care. Secondly, she was a key player in the establishment of a pictorial genre in Uganda, initially centrally located within Buganda. However, I contend that whereas at Makerere Art School, cultural artefacts had become an essential resource material in the design and production of textiles for the modern African clientele, there is no evidence to suggest that the modern design-techniques were paradoxically invoked in order to promote indigenous fabrics like bark-cloth.

7.7 Conclusion

Thus far, we have observed that the Baganda like many other ethnic societies in Africa had their own methods of imparting education to the younger generation. A workshop approach was the most applicable methodology in engendering skills in bark-cloth making. As the Baganda embraced Christianity and the associated Western system of education, many of the indigenous traditions were suppressed or simply overtaken by the new social developments, bark-cloth being one of those affected. In the second part of the chapter, I have analysed the contribution of various European groups and individuals to the educational transformations in Buganda. I have singled out Margaret Trowell.

¹⁹ Because Makerere College eventually transformed into an institution of higher education for the entire East African region, students who joined Makerere Art School came from different countries.

whose participation in art education (though in a Europeanized style) helped to channel local art practices back in the mainstream education. In the next two chapters, I follow-up on the socio-cultural, economic and political events that characterized the post-independence period, and how they in turn, extended the functions and meaning of bark-cloth.

8 POST-INDEPENDENCE POWER STRUGGLES IN UGANDA: THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO THE EVOLUTION OF THE ROLE AND MEANING OF BARK-CLOTH

8.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the state of the bark-cloth industry in the four decades that followed on from the end of the British colonial era in 1962 until 1992. It is particularly concerned with the various waves of political and economic turbulence in Buganda since independence, and how they influenced the production and usage of bark-cloth. The first section of the chapter gives an overview of the political and economic situation in Buganda at the dawn of independence until the abolition of the Monarchy in 1966, which I refer to here, as the ‘pre-abolition period’, and its implications for the bark-cloth industry. The second and third sections are concerned with the ‘abolition period,’ which effectively started in 1967 when Obote promulgated a new constitution by which all cultural institutions in Uganda were suspended indefinitely. In the second section, I particularly follow up on Obote’s policy of nationalization, which, as has been argued by some scholars, was designed to put to a hold the level of progress in Buganda, in order to give other regions of Uganda an opportunity to catch up. I try to articulate the significance of Obote’s policy in the evolution of the role and meaning of bark-cloth. The third section deals with the politics of scarcity during the 1970s and the 1980s when the political and economic situation in Uganda became worse. As I argue, this period was characterized by a rejuvenation of the historical functions of bark-cloth in several parts of Buganda although in some counties, access to bark-cloth was curtailed by political turbulence.

8.2 Uganda at the Dawn of Independence: New Economic Policies

The end of British colonial rule¹ marked a new era in the political, economical and cultural history of Buganda as indeed the rest of Uganda. Sir Frederick Edward Muteesa II, the Kabaka of Buganda became President of the new Republic of Uganda, and Apollo Milton Obote was elected Prime Minister. The central aim of the government of the newly formed Republic of Uganda was to expand the economy by encouraging the participation of all the people of Uganda in the development process. Under its policy of Ugandanisation, Ugandans were recruited in the civil service and government-owned companies (parastatals).² In the agricultural sector, peasants were encouraged to grow more crops while the government, for its part, concentrated on the expansion of infrastructure services and ensured adequate prices for agricultural produce.³ In Buganda, robusta coffee continued to be the main cash crop although other non-traditional cash crops like maize, groundnuts, beans, soon became sources of income for the ordinary people.

The economic boom of the mid-twentieth-century gave rise to increased demand for modern sector goods, since the ordinary people had more income at their disposal.⁴ Because most of these commodities were imported from the West, import-substitution became a central focus of the independent government. Hence, in its five-year-development plan (1961/2-1965/66), the government embarked on plans for the

¹ Uganda achieved self-governance in 1961 and full independence on October 9th 1962.

² Under the colonial regime, the expatriate staff managed the civil service and all parastatal organizations in Uganda.

³ See *Uganda Government First Five-Year Development Plan 1961/62 to 1965/66*.

⁴ Bigsten and Mugerwa report that between 1960 and 1970, real GDP grew at an annual average of close to 5%, domestic investment at 7.5%, and private consumption at 5.2% (1999: 1).

expansion of the few industries inherited from the colonial administration. Of significant importance was the expansion of the Nyanza Textile Industries (NYTIL)⁵ at Njeru in Jinja, the periphery of the eastern borders of Buganda. The £1.7 million expansion programme was aimed at raising production capacity from 15 million yards of cloth in 1961 to 30 million yards, and further prospects of expansion were envisaged (Five-Year Development Plan: 34). As Arne Bigsten and Steve Kayizzi Mugerwa have reported, “the textile industry [NYTIL] not only supplied domestic needs, but also had a substantial surplus for export” (1999: 1).

8.2.1 Implications of New Economic Policies to the Bark-cloth Industry

The above policies enabled rapid economic progress in Uganda, and increased the disposable income within the rural communities. Many more people were able to meet their quotidian needs, as locally manufactured goods were easily accessible. Textiles made by NYTIL, locally referred to as *engoye eza Jinja* (literary meaning textiles manufactured in Jinja), provided for most of the “traditional” functions of bark-cloth. The economic boom and the abundance of textile products in Uganda essentially meant that the survival of the bark-cloth industry of the Baganda was no longer assured. The bark-cloth industry was almost eclipsed by the textile modernity. NYTIL textiles were adopted

⁵ NYTIL was established in 1955 as a major investment by the Uganda Development Corporation (UDC), a parastatal organization charged since 1952, with the responsibility to promote private British manufacturing enterprise in the Protectorate. With capital shares of about £ 1.5 million, of which UDC subscribed £ 600,000, the Bleachers Association of Manchester £ 1,000, and the Calico Printers Association Ltd. of Manchester, £ 750,000, NYTIL became the first ever spinning and weaving mill in East Africa. The factory was established at a time when Britain had lost her stake in the East African textile market following stiff competition from countries like Japan, India, Netherlands and the United States. In fact, this crisis started as far back as 1932 when the Japanese flooded the East Africa market cheap textile products. The British textile merchants in East Africa forwarded a proposal for the construction of a spinning and weaving industry within the colony but this proposal was not pursued until 1955 when NYTIL was eventually established. Effective operation of NYTIL came in 1956 under the management of Calico Printers Association of Manchester that had the biggest shares. For further discussion, see Mamdani (1999:253-255).

by many families for apparel, bedding, and upholstery purposes, as one informant explained to me, “when NYTIL industries opened during the 1950s, it flooded the market with textiles that it became possible for even the poorest families in Buganda to afford to buy textile products” (“kampuni ya NYTIL bweyaggulawo mu myaka gy’ataano, awo engoye nezikyaaka nga n’omwavu asembayo asobola okwefunira eky’okwambala”) (Nalubega, interview, June, 2002).

It is worth noting that by the 1960s, bark-cloth had long ceased to be an essential fabric in the customary marriage ceremonies of the Baganda although the term *olubugo* (bark-cloth) was retained to refer to the presents of woven clothes, offered by the groom to the bride and her family (see chapter three). Textiles also became a common feature in the burial ceremonies, as a sign of prestige. We recall that until the last quarter of the nineteenth-century, the amount of bark-cloth used in the burial ceremonies of the Baganda was a key indicator of the social status of the deceased. However, in the wake of cultural contact, the amount of pieces of unbleached cotton, which the Baganda referred to as *looti*,⁶ became the new yardstick of a prestigious burial, and coffins became a new feature in the burial ceremonies of the Baganda. Whereas bark-cloth continued to be used as a shroud, it came to be considered as an inferior product. As field evidence suggested, the original meaning of bark-cloth in the burial ceremonies was inverted: usage of numerous bark-cloths became a tradition of the poor while the rich were buried in fewer and fewer bark-clothes. One informant explained to me: “my mother, [addressed me as such, out of respect because I come from the same clan *nnyonyi nyange* (egret) as his late mother] things have changed of late, but during the 1950s and 1960s people had

⁶ *Looti* is a corrupted form of the coastal term *ddooti* for the standard measurement of cloth, which was equivalent to four yards.

began realizing good returns out of coffee farming and trade. It had become the norm for a rich person in Buganda to be buried in several pieces of cotton fabrics, which was often a big conversation around the village. People would exclaim that so and so was buried in ten or fifteen *looti*” (“maama wange, lwa mirembe ku kyuka naye mu myaka gy’ataano negy’enkaaga abantu baali bafunye ssente mu kulima n’okusuubuula emmwanyi era ng’omugagga okufa nga bamuziika mu ngoye za ppamba; baziitanga looti, nga abantu ku kyalo banyumya nti omugagga gundi baamuziise mu looti kkumi oba kkumi na ttaano”) (Kansere, interview, June, 2002).

Further, because of the rise in rural incomes, many people started offering *amabugo* (financial contributions towards burial arrangements), thus indirectly contributing towards the purchase of woven fabrics for burial yet originally, contribution towards burial ceremonies came in form of bark-cloth and food. As the “traditional” cultural functions of bark-cloth continued to fade away, being replaced by modern textile products, bark-cloth assumed new functions. J.W. Chanell, who visited Uganda in the 1960s, bears testimony to the popularity of bark-cloth as a tourist artefact. As Chanell observed, “Children in the schools [were]... being taught to embroider and make attractive table-mats from the cloth [meaning bark-cloth] and few tourists [would] leave Uganda without taking with them a sample of this work. Book markers, blotter pads and calendars made from bark-cloth also ha[d] a ready sale” (1962: 154).⁷ Nevertheless, there were certain rituals where the use of bark-cloth prevailed relatively uninterrupted. For example, bark-cloth has remained an important fabric during the last funeral rites of the Baganda, where it is serves to identify an heir to the deceased (*okussaako omusika*). I will expound on the continuity of this tradition, in the next chapter.

⁷ I will return to the impact of the tourist industry on bark-cloth in the next chapter.

8.3 From Independence to the Abolition of the Buganda Monarchy

However, Kabaka Muteesa II's presidency hardly lasted for more than half a decade. The relationship between Kabaka Muteesa II and Obote his Prime minister, started to crumble as the latter tried to gain an upper hand in the administration. In this new political twist, Obote accused Kabaka Muteesa II of a conspiracy to overthrow the government of the Republic of Uganda (Gukiina 1972:128). Obote became wary that Kabaka Muteesa II would repossess his kingdom and take over the entire Uganda. Thus, on February 24th 1966, Obote declared that he was assuming all governmental powers, and suspended the 1962 constitution, and the Parliament. In April 1966, Obote promulgated a new constitution, making himself president of Uganda and Commander in Chief of the military, a political move that threatened the position of the Kabaka and the federal status of Buganda. In retaliation, on May 20 1966, the Buganda *Lukiiko* passed a motion ordering the central government to transfer its administrative centre out of Buganda within ten days. As a result, on May 24th 1966, Obote ordered the siege of the Kabaka's palace at Mengo, which left hundreds of people in the royal service dead, and the entire collection of the royal artefacts vandalized, and others completely burnt down (Gukiina 1972: 128- 131; Kasozi 1994: 85-87). Kabaka Muteesa II survived the ordeal and escaped to Britain where he died three years later.

The disgraceful deposition of the monarchy steered emotional reactions throughout Buganda. Police stations and other Government infrastructure became the target of angry protestors against the indecent assault on Buganda's core institution. A state of emergency was declared in Buganda and it was not going to be lifted for several years; a large number of the Buganda oligarchy and members of the royal family were

arrested and locked up in Luzira Maximum Prison, including *Omumbejja* Irene Ndagire, the *Nnaalinya* of Kabaka Muteesa II. All political activities in Buganda were banned. The Kabaka's palace of Mengo was swiftly converted into an army base from where Obote's soldiers stormed every part of Buganda brutalizing and killing people.⁸ To many Baganda, the magnitude of Obote's assault on Buganda royalty in 1966 was beyond imagination as compared to the political crisis of 1953, in which Kabaka Muteesa II was first sent to exile by the British authorities. We recall that the 1953 crisis led to the redefinition of the meaning and functions of bark-cloth, as it became politically charged. However, because of the extreme aggression with which Obote dislodged the Buganda monarch, and the military operations that followed, the use of bark-cloth as a symbol of protest did not feature prominently in the political events that followed the 1966 crisis. As several people argued, bark-cloth was too obvious a symbol that it could attract immediate attention of the government wings and jeopardize any plans against government targets (anonymous, focus group discussion, August 2002). However, one can as well argue that the humiliation the Baganda suffered at Obote's command, and the absence of bark-cloth from the political equation, was in itself an icon representing the vulnerability that had befallen the Baganda society. This argument supports one of the theories of this thesis that the meaning of bark-cloth in Buganda has kept in a continuous shift dependent on change in the social, political and economic context.

However, Obote's attack on the Buganda royalty did not win him popularity as other social groups like the Banyankole, Batooro, Banyoro and Basoga, became wary of similar events happening to their own cultural leaders. Because of the fear of a unitary

⁸ To control the riots in Buganda, other barracks and battalions were set up in Masaka, Mubende and Nakasongola respectively. In 1968, *Bulange* (Buganda Parliament) was turned into an army headquarters.

uprising against his government, Obote decided in 1967 to abrogate the constitution of 1962, and to promulgate what he referred to as a Republican constitution, which made him the President and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces. By the same constitution, he abolished all cultural institutions in Uganda.

8.4 Obote's Economic Policy (1967-1971)

From the time he took over the presidency of the Republic of Uganda, Obote adopted an authoritarian attitude, and embraced a highly centralized political approach. Whereas he remained committed to some of the development policies set out in the first development plan drawn at independence, such as poverty reduction and improvement of the standards of living for all people in Uganda, Obote adopted socialist ideologies which promoted the values of nationalization. The nationalization policy was geared towards equitable distribution of income and resources in all regions of Uganda. It should be remembered that during the pre-independence period, most of the infrastructure and economic activities were concentrated in the south and western regions of the Protectorate, administered by a small sector of the population. Effective nationalization, as it was argued, entailed government direct participation in the economic affairs, a move to "the left", as Obote termed it, in the Nakivubo Pronouncements of May 1st 1970, during which he publicized his radical economic policies. Under this new economic plan, Obote withdrew the rights of private organizations and individuals to participate freely and directly in the major development programs. The State took control over the major economic activities in Uganda by creating various government-owned companies (parastatals) whose nucleus was the Uganda Development Corporation. It was decreed

that all import and export businesses except those involving fuels were to be conducted by the State. In addition, the government was to take sixty percent of all companies, industries, and financial institutions operating in the country (as cited in Kasozi 1994: 90). In the agricultural sector, the Lint Marketing Board (LMB) undertook the marketing of cotton while the sale of coffee fell under the monopoly of the Coffee Marketing Board (CMB). Even the marketing of non-traditional cash crops like ground nuts, beans, and maize, was controlled by the State. In 1968, the Produce Marketing Board (PMB) was established to assist State control of the internal marketing of food items. Section 9 of the law that brought PMB on board, stated that, “No person shall buy any controlled minor crops (a) unless he has a license, (b) except in a declared market” (as quoted in Mamdani, 1999: 262). Yet the state reserved itself the powers to issue licenses and to declare marketing areas, priority often given to members of the governing bureaucracy thus squeezing many Baganda traders out of business.

8.4.1 Government’s Involvement in the Cultural Sector

On the other hand, the marketing of cultural products was centralized under the Ministry of Culture and Community Development. In 1966, the Ministry initiated a National Handicrafts Scheme in order to encourage the production of ‘traditional’ handicrafts, in a bid to diversify the income generating activities in the rural communities. The scheme was mainly intended to benefit women’s clubs, though it was eventually expanded to incorporate men and women in all districts of Uganda. This was the first time that government became directly involved in the promotion and marketing of cultural products. Centres were set up nationwide to market the craft products. The

centres took a small percentage to cover the running costs. while the rest went back to the producers. The Uganda Crafts Emporium was established in Kampala by government as the main marketing centre for craft products systematically collected nationwide, and an illustrated catalogue of Uganda crafts was distributed through the High Commissions and Embassies all over the world. The catalogue, as Judith von D. Miller informs us, “picture[d] and classifie[d] several hundred items of weaving, household ornaments and utensils (adopted for European style homes) furniture (for Ugandan homes), bark-cloth, musical instruments, arms and weapons, personal ornaments and skin goods...[m]ost of these items [being] of traditional designs used by Ugandan tribal groups (1975: 65). Further, government also organized courses in bookkeeping and offered start-up capital to a few individuals to set up private crafts enterprises (ibid: 55).

Whereas the centralization of control of production and distribution was probably important for the government to realize a rapid economic growth, it impaired free trade, a stronghold of the Baganda, who had become heavily involved in the production and marketing of agricultural products. On this point, I agree with Kasozi, who argues that Obote’s nationalization policy was geared towards halting Buganda’s development in order to give other regions an opportunity to catch up (1994: 95). As the Baganda men were squeezed out of business and were rendered economically “anaemic”, many resorted to bark-cloth making (Ssebbaale, interview, June, 2002) while the women joined the struggle by making use of the limited handicraft skills they acquired through their family lineage, and through the Women Clubs. Many women became the breadwinners in their homes while others contributed significantly to the domestic affairs with the meagre

income they generated from their craft products, a good number of which were made out of bark-cloth (Lwanga, interview, December, 2002).

8.5 The End of Obote's First Regime

By 1969, Obote's authoritarian policies had penetrated all institutions. Political activity except that of UPC, the government party, was discouraged while within the party itself, some members who seemed to have problems with the policies of the government were sidelined. As it so happened, Obote's policies won him a repertoire of opponents including some of his former allies like Idi Amin, whose military expertise he relied upon when he decided to oust Kabaka Muteesa II. By the end of the decade, power struggles between Amin and Obote had come to light, and the political clock kept ticking as each of them tried to devise means of eliminating the other from the political game. Finally, in September 1970, a golden opportunity manifested; as Amin left for Egypt to attend the funeral of Gamel Abdel Nasser, Obote took the opportunity to reorganize the army and to reduce Amin's influence in the military. Obote's attempts to arrest Amin upon his return from exile were futile, following a tip off allegedly by the Israel intelligence team in Uganda (Kasozi 1994: 103). His abortive plans to eliminate Amin were a big lesson to the latter. When Obote left for Singapore in January 1971 to attend the Commonwealth Conference, Amin also took the pleasurable opportunity to organize a *coup d' état* on January, 25th 1971, which was welcomed by many people in Uganda.

Amin's coup, as Bigsten and Mugerwa inform us, "was initially popular among certain key groups, especially in the south of the country, bureaucrats, businessmen, the royal worthies of Buganda, and even Western diplomats. These groups had experienced a

decline in political influence, and some in their economic fortunes...during Obote's seemingly well-orchestrated radical onslaught on 'the privileged and the feudal classes' at the end of the 1960s" (1999: 20). Kasozi also clearly explains that, "The Baganda rejoiced and applauded the change not because they loved Amin, but because they hated Obote. It was more a negative vote against Obote than a positive one for Amin" (1994: 103). Hence, in order to win the political support of the Baganda who were the most disgruntled by Obote's abolition of their monarchy, Amin immediately lifted the state of emergency earlier imposed by Obote in 1966, and offered to return the remains of Kabaka Muteesa II, who had died in exile in the United Kingdom in 1969. His government also offered to arrange the entombment of the monarch. Two days later, he released the political prisoners who had been unduly detained by Obote's government including among others the five ministers of Buganda who had been arrested on the eve of the 1966 crisis, and two royal notables; *Nnaalinya* Ndagire, the queen-sister of Kabaka Muteesa II, and Prince Badru Kakungulu, caretaker of Buganda's royal family (Kasozi 1994: 105; Omara-Otunnu 1987: 102).

Amin found it crucial to get the support of the Baganda because they were the occupants of the central region which hosts the capital and administrative centre, and most of the major businesses were conducted in Buganda. Many Baganda, as I was informed, were willing to accept Amin's regime in the hope that he would restore their monarchy. One member of the royal family explained: "at first we thought that Amin would probably restore our monarchy despite the fact that he was the very person who led the gang that stormed the Kabaka's palace, thus forcing the Kabaka to exile" ("okusooka twali tulowooza nti oba olyawo Amin anazzaawo obwakabaka bwaffe yadde

nga ye mwenyini yeyakulemba abalumba olubiri lwa Kabaka ekyamuviirako okuwanganguka”)(Kikome, interview, October, 2002). However, Amin did not comply with the requests of the Baganda to restore their monarchy most probably because he was then well versed with the significance of the monarchy to the Baganda. Amin knew very well that the restoration of the monarchy was likely to bring about power relations that would never balance in his favour because of his direct involvement in the 1966 crisis. In October 1971, he finally made a statement that brought to an end people’s speculation about a possible return of cultural institutions. Amin’s statement also affected the support he had received from the people of central Uganda. In the period that followed, things began to change drastically, as the true colours of Amin’s military regime began to manifest. As I proceed to discuss in the next section, Amin’s regime marked yet a new chapter in the social, economic and political developments in Uganda, which in turn, had some impact on the bark-cloth industry.

8.6 Amin’s Dictatorial Regime and the Politics of Decline and Decay (1971-1979)

Amin came to power without any specific policy, but he capitalized on overturning Obote’s socialist ideologies upon which, the infamous nationalization policy had been modelled. He criticized Obote for over-concentrating on politics at the expense of taking care of Uganda’s economy, and promised new measures to restore people’s economic life (Bigsten and Mugerwa 1999:20). Amin sought to restore people’s economic life by eliminating the Asians who constituted Uganda’s commercial sector. In a radical move he took in August 1972, Amin expelled Asians from Uganda totalling to over seventy-five thousands, in what he referred to as an ‘Economic War’. Amin gave the Asians three

months to vacate the country and ordered their property to be guarded as ruthlessly as the Asians themselves were being expelled. A large number of Asian companies were turned over to the state while others fell in the hands of Amin's military personnel and kin, many of whom, had no experience what so ever, in running business. Men in uniforms stormed every part of Uganda where Asians had established their businesses to take control. But the low cadres in the army soon realized that if they waited for the time of official allocation of the property of the departed Asians, it was the high-ranking officials that would share the booty. Hence they dived in and helped themselves with whatever goods they could afford to carry away (Mamdani 1999: 306).

The expulsion of Asians, and the lawlessness that followed, resulted in a tragic fall of the economy, and at the same time heightened the level of insecurity in Buganda as indeed, in the rest of Uganda. These unfortunate occurrences initiated the army into the culture of using the gun in order to get rich quickly, which prevailed unchecked for the rest of Amin's regime. Many people lost their lives at the hands of Amin's soldiers; and a good number of these killings were state-sponsored, in order to wipe out Amin's opponents (real and imaginary). The level of security came to zero, which prompted the departure en masse, of foreign professionals and diplomats as well as nationals of the elite class, out of Uganda.

The departure of the non-African community had serious repercussions on various sectors of development and in turn pushed the bark-cloth industry into new directions. The economy collapsed drastically as many countries broke diplomatic and economic ties with Uganda because of the serious defiance of human rights. In order to realize some revenue, the government introduced various forms of tax on private enterprises and cut

back producer prices on cash crops, which forced the peasant community to resort to subsistence production. Among the coffee-growing regions, of which Buganda was part, “coffee... trees were... neglected so that output fell and some output was diverted outside official marketing channels” (Bigsten and Mugerwa, 1999: 26).

In the industrial sector, production of consumer goods by the few manufacturing industries was incapacitated by the departure of the expert staff, and due to lack of spare parts. Hence access to basic consumer goods like soap, cooking oil, salt, sugar and textiles, became a privilege of the very few in the civil service, and those who had close links with the Army. Aluminium saucepans, basins, kettles and other articles that had been introduced in Buganda since the era of the Swahili-Arab traders became rare commodities. This scarcity of basic commodities gave a new impetus to the bark-cloth industry. Kizito-Maria Kasule recalls that, “Bark cloth once again became the principle bedding item, as many families in Buganda did not have the means (financial and political), to get access to NYTIL textiles, which had then become a rare commodity” (Interview, September 2002). It should be recalled that the expansion of coffee cultivation since the 1930s, had rekindled the planting of bark-cloth trees in many parts of Buganda. Therefore, the economic difficulties of the 1960s under Obote’s regime, and the 1970s under Amin’s regime, found Buganda well populated with bark-cloth trees.

In the event of this political and economic stress, many women in Buganda continued to make use of their craft skills in order to meet several necessities in their families like contributing to their children’s education by buying books and uniforms and sometimes paying their tuition. Bark-cloth became a useful fabric in this respect, as I

explain in the next few paragraphs, based on a personal account, having lived and worked with my mother who was a practicing bark-cloth embroiderer and craft producer.

8.7 Bark-cloth and the Craft Industry in the 1970s: A Personal Account

My mother, Angela Lwanga, was a member of the Catholic Women's Club of Bikira Parish in Buddu County. The club was set up by the religious nuns of the Bannabikira Congregation, attached to the parish. As many other Women Clubs that sprang up nationwide during the 1950s, the Bikira Women's club provided Catholic women of the parish with opportunities to develop their potential and to improve the welfare of their families by participating in various educational, socio-economic, and religious activities. Sharing of craft skills and other domestic sciences was a central activity. My mother had trained as a teacher before she got married to my father who worked in the civil service as a magistrate. Because of her social position, she became an active member of the club as a trainer and role model. She made craft products predominantly out of bark-cloth and she taught us (myself, my four sisters and six brothers) from an early stage, some of the craft skills and also involved us in her business. It is therefore from this background that I discuss the bark-cloth design activities during the 1970s, using my experience as an example.

Through the contacts initiated by the Church, members of Bikira Women's Club received business orders to make various craft products ranging from handbags, letter-racks, tea-cosies, table-runners, to wastepaper baskets, using local materials especially *ebitoogo* (papyrus stalks), *ensansa* (palm leaves), *obuso* (raffia) *obukeedo* (shredded banana-leaf stalks), and *embugo* (bark-cloth). A large number of these products were

designed to fit the requirements of modern homes, but especially for the tourist market. These bark-cloth products were often embellished with design and colour, using embroidery techniques and locally available fibres and dyes. The motifs were based on stylized flora and fauna of Uganda, the crested crane, the symbol of Uganda, being the most popular motif applied.

As I argue, the political and economic shifts in the 1960s and 1970s prompted further change in the patronage of bark-cloth. Through their craft activities, women became the new patrons of the bark-cloth industry, despite the cultural- embargoes that had earlier been imposed on them. Women came to influence directly or indirectly, the methods of bark-cloth production as they started to respond to the consumer demands, through a chain of links with the known and unknown buyers.

I recall, from my childhood, the various discussions that went on between my mother and the Bannabikira nuns who used to come to our house to place orders for various bark-cloth items. I also listened to numerous discussions between my mother and the various bark-cloth makers who came to our house with loads of bark-cloth, which formed her raw materials. Colour intensity, thickness of the fabric, and the amount of patchwork done on a piece of bark-cloth were some of the issues that my mother considered of utmost importance when purchasing bark-cloth for craft production. Whereas the dimension of the fabric was normally an added advantage, often my mother picked a relatively smaller piece, as long as it was of the “right” colour and feel, and as long as it was free of patches. In a recent interview with her in relation to her craft activities, she told me that her choice of bark-cloth was always dependent on the feedback she received from the consumers through the nuns, who were the mediators in

this cultural industry. The right colour, according to her explanation, was a medium-brown, which was achieved by exposing the *kimote* bark fabric in the sun for a day or two. As she clarified: “The bark-cloth appeared fresh yet if it was exposed longer, then it became too dark, and several tourists did not like it. So I had to tell the bark-cloth makers exactly what I wanted, and with time, they responded to my needs” (“lwabanga lulabika bulungi okusinga ezo zebaanika okumala ennaku enyingi; kuba ziddugalirira ne zitanyumisa bitambala oba ensawo, abalambuzi byebaali basinga okwettanira. Kale nga abakomazi mbagamba okunfunira embugo ennungi era oluvanyuma baataandika okukola kye nnali netaaga”) (Lwanga, interview, December, 2002).

The nuns’ mediation in the production and marketing of craft items made out of bark-cloth enables us to articulate the magnitude of change in their attitudes and perhaps attitudes of the Catholic Church in Uganda towards bark-cloth. Because the nuns too participated in the production of such craft products, they were therefore patrons of the bark-cloth industry. One nun, a member of the Bannabikira Congregation clarified:

The economic crisis affected the nuns and other religious groups in Uganda on equal terms as it affected the rest of the populace; we, too, had to struggle like everybody else, in order to make ends meet. At such a critical time, it was our responsibility to inspire members of the clergy to become resourceful using the natural resources within our reach. In Buddu [County], bark-cloth was an abundant material, and it was also quite versatile (Nambi, interview, November 2002).

It should also be remembered that, not so long ago, Vatican Council II of 1963 had called for the renewal of the Catholic Church in Africa in a bid to bring the church closer to the people. One of the strategies, the Catholic Church in Uganda employed in order to realize this objective, as Nannyonga-Tamusuza states, “was the indigenization of

its music” (2001: 149). She further informs us that Baakisimba, a typology of the Baganda music tradition accompanied by a set of drums and dance structures, once popular at the royal court, and never performed in church, was eventually introduced. As she explains, Baakisimba was first performed in the Catholic Church at the St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome on October 16, 1964, when Pope Paul VI canonized twenty-two Uganda martyrs, who were massacred by Kabaka Mwanga I at the dawn of Christianity in Buganda. To mark the occasion, Joseph Kyagambiddwa, a celebrated Muganda church musician, was commissioned to compose in a *Kiganda* style, a work of twenty-two songs, in honour of each of the twenty-two Catholic martyrs, which he referred to as the ‘Uganda Martyrs Oratorio’. A group of African students in Europe, mainly Ugandans, Kenyans and Nigerians, was organized to perform this Oratorio (ibid: 149-150).

Despite the lack of evidence to illustrate how the performers dressed on that ceremonial occasion, I cannot rule out the possibility that the male performers sported the usual bark-cloth in toga style, over the white *kanzu*, which constitutes the *Kiganda* dress style. After all, the Baganda (Kyagambiddwa himself being one of them), rarely miss such opportunities to display their dress traditions especially when it comes to such events of international recognition. The point not to be missed here is that apart from the tourist wants for exotic products, and the economic pressure of the 1970s, the indigenization of the Catholic Church also enabled the Bannabikira nuns to break the religio-ideological barrier that had originally confined bark-cloth within the ‘satanic’ realm.

8.8 End of Amin's Era

Amin's regime lasted for eight years. There was no sign of his removal from power because of his brutal tendencies towards any one that he suspected of opposing his regime, had it not been for the power struggles that cropped up from within the army which were fuelled by ethnic conflicts. These divisions in the Army posed an imminent threat to the longevity of Amin's dictatorial regime. In order to divert public attention away from these political weaknesses in the regime that were beginning to unfold, Amin conceived an infamous idea to embark on a military adventure into Tanzania, a neighbouring state with which Uganda shares her southern border. In November 1978, Amin launched a military assault in the north-western part of Tanzania, in claim of a portion of land equivalent to 710 square miles, located between River Kagera and the Uganda border (Ocitti 2000:238). This portion of land, which was part of Buganda, was annexed to Tanzania when the British and Germans drew the final borders of their colonial territory (see chapter four, section 4.4). In retaliation, the Tanzanian government, together with several factions of Ugandans who had fled to exile to escape the horrendous political situation in Uganda, launched a counter-attack and flushed Amin out of power on April 11, 1979. With the approval of the National Consultative Council (NCC), the executive body of the Uganda National Liberation Front (UNLF) formed by different factions of political exiles, who worked with the Tanzanian government to oust Amin's dictatorial regime, Yusuf Kironde Lule, a one time Principal of Makerere College (that later transformed into Makerere University), was sworn in as the new President two days later.

However, the political situation in Uganda was far from getting back on course as political power struggles and variations in political interests became a main theme during the post-Amin period. Lule's presidency lasted for only 68 days. He was voted out of office and was replaced by Godfrey Lukongwa Binaisa in January 1980. By the end of the year 1980, the Military Council of the UNLF, chaired by Paulo Muwanga, had taken over the administration of the Government, and the organization of multi-party general elections, which returned Milton Obote back to the political centre. The results of the presidential elections were however contested from different quarters of the electorate, thus driving several political figures to the bush, in what turned out to be a civil war, having its base in Buganda, in the counties of Bulemeezi (that came to be referred to as Luweero Triangle), Mawokota and Ssinga. Obote's second regime which lasted for five years between 1980 and 1985 was thus largely preoccupied with fighting political insurgency.

The social, political and economic situation in Uganda changed from bad to worse as rebel activities spread throughout Buganda, and other parts of Uganda. Socio-economic activities once again came to a standstill. Within Buganda, the organization of cultural activities like pre-marriage introductions and weddings, or child-initiation ceremonies, and last funeral rights, which involved the use of bark-cloth, proved impossible amidst this period of political turbulence, mainly for the fear that such social gatherings might be mistaken for rebel groups. Besides, many people had been dislodged from their homes. Tens of thousands of people lost their lives in the civil war, particularly in Bulemeezi, Ssinga, Mawokota and Busiro counties, but due to the volatile political situation, many Baganda in these counties could not even arrange proper burials for their beloved ones.

As discussed earlier, according to Kiganda customs, a proper burial necessitates the use of bark-cloth, the connecting thread between past and present generations (see chapter three, section 3.4.3).

In May 1985, Obote's regime collapsed following internal conflicts within the army, which gave way to a political coup. General Tito Okello led Uganda back to military governance, but his regime was terminated prematurely in January 1986 when rebels from the bush, stormed Kampala, Uganda's capital on January 25. The next day, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni was sworn in as President, thus bringing about the end of the civil war.

8.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, it has been noted that the end of the British colonial era marked the beginning of a new chapter in the social, economic and political dynamics in Uganda, which in turn influenced the production and usage of bark-cloth. It has been mentioned that the economic boom, which the Baganda enjoyed out of their agricultural produce continued for most of the 1960s. It was further stated that the expansion of the textile factory at Njeru, which enabled easy access to cheaper textile products, gave rise to the use of woven fabrics, in lieu of bark-cloth, for burial purposes, among the ordinary Baganda. However, as the economy began to crumble amidst the political power struggles that characterized the post-colonial era, the use of local cultural artefacts like bark-cloth once again gained momentum. It was noted that within the domestic sphere bark-cloth was re-instated as a bedding material while in the art and crafts sector, women (including religious nuns) emerged as a new class of patrons of bark-cloth; they engaged

bark-cloth in the production of crafts, as a means to earn much-needed income. Within the educational sector, the scarcity of scholastic materials engendered innovation in the use of locally sourced materials in visual art practice, although it was not until the restoration of the Buganda monarchy in 1993 that such cultural artefacts, as bark-cloth, became an important medium of artistic expression in institutions of higher learning, as I discuss in the next chapter.

9 RESTORATION OF THE BUGANDA MONARCHY AND THE REINVENTION OF BARK-CLOTH (1993- 2004)

9.1 Introduction

The restoration of the monarchy in 1993 marked a new era in the cultural history of Buganda, and in the history of bark-cloth. Since the restoration, a new trend has emerged in the application of bark-cloth that warrants a full chapter. The restoration culminated in the revival of some cultural events related to royalty that had ceased for almost thirty years, with the abolition of the Buganda monarchy and other cultural institutions in Uganda in 1967. Most significantly, was the *amatikkira ga Kabaka* (Coronation of Kabaka) Muwenda Mutebi II, which occurred on July, 31st 1993 after a week-long series of cultural ceremonies by which Mutebi II, who was at the time holding a title of Ssaabataka (head of the clan leaders), was initiated into his new role. The major Coronation rituals were carried out at Nnaggalabi hill in Busiro County, a historical site where accession rituals of the Baganda kings are performed.¹

This chapter, therefore, examines the trend of developments in the usage of bark-cloth, in order to analyze the extent to which its role and meaning have been redefined in the past decade. An inter-play between tradition and modernity characterizes the usage of bark-cloth in contemporary cultural practice. The first section focuses on the evolution of

¹ Kaggwa (1934 [1907]: 6) has noted that Nnaggalabi hill became a coronation site in the mid-eighteenth century during the reign of *Kabaka* Nnamugala (ca.1744-1754) after he consulted a medium called Buddo, who made him climb over his charm and also informed him of the importance of Nnaggalabi hill in the history of Buganda. It was on this hill, as Nnamugala was meant to understand, that his ancestor Kintu, the legendary ruler of Buganda, fought and defeated Bemba, a notorious *Kabaka* who was referred to by his subjects as a “snake”. After killing Bemba the “snake”, Kintu thus “ate” Buganda, a term used among the Baganda to refer to royal succession. The medium hence impressed upon *Kabaka* Nnamugala that from his generation onwards, every successor to the throne must go to Nnaggalabi hill in order to climb on the charm of Buddo in remembrance of Kintu’s victory, a ritual that *Kabaka* Mutebi II also had to perform.

bark-cloth as a medium of communication. I base my discussion on the Coronation and Coronation anniversary events, which have continually provided various artists and designers with inspiration for creative practice using the medium of bark-cloth. In addition to the endogenous cultural factors, other exogenous variables have contributed to the shift in the usage and meaning of bark-cloth of the Baganda. The relative peace currently prevailing in most of Uganda since the end of the civil war has helped to boost the tourism industry; which in turn, has had a considerable impact on the production and application of bark-cloth. A detailed discussion on the impact of globalization on cultural production, and on bark-cloth related activities is presented in the second section where I also return to examine the contribution of the art institutions in the visual-cultural transformation of bark-cloth. I discuss the works of several artists and designers who have recently engaged themselves in exploring the potential of bark-cloth in contemporary cultural practice. I examine the role of art galleries and museums in the mediation of the meaning of bark-cloth. In the last section, I re-examine the continuity in the symbolic functions of bark-cloth within the two domains of Buganda, and highlight a few contexts in which some traditions of the past, which involved the use of bark-cloth have been re-invented.

9.2 Restoration of the Buganda Monarchy

After the civil war, which ended in 1986, the new government under the leadership of Yoweri Kaguta Museveni undertook a radical decision to return the property confiscated by the Amin Government from the Asians in 1972. As a result, members of the indigenous community, whose possessions had been unfairly withdrawn

from them by the previous regimes, also took the opportunity to demand the return of their property and cultural rights. The Baganda, in particular, demanded out-right the restoration of the *Kabakaship* (Buganda Monarchy) that had been abolished by Milton Obote in 1967, and the return of various physical structures that had been confiscated by the then current government. These included among others, the Royal Palace at Mengo which had been turned into an army barracks, the Buganda Parliament buildings at Bulange, and the land and physical structures (numerous sub-county and county headquarters throughout the kingdom) that were reclaimed for government use. The Baganda collectively referred to these physical structures and the institution of the *Kabakaship*, as *ebyaffe*, literary meaning (what belongs to us). President Museveni agreed to the restoration of the Buganda Monarchy, and the return of key structures of the Buganda cultural institution like the *Lubiri* (*Kabaka's* palace) and *Bulange* (his administrative headquarters), both of which are located at Mengo, in Kyaddondo County. President Museveni also accepted to open dialogue on the return of the remaining *ebyaffe*.²

The coronation of *Kabaka* Muwenda Mutebi II thus marked yet a new chapter in the application of bark-cloth. Since the coronation, bark-cloth has once again become a prominent artefact in the visual-cultural discussions relating to ethnicity, self-identity and the notion of *Gandaness*, of course with redefined meaning as I discuss in this chapter.

² This issue is currently dominating the political debate, as Uganda is preparing for the next presidential elections in 2006. No consensus has yet been reached on the return of the remaining property of Buganda, and discussions, have apparently collapsed in the recent past, following the Baganda's insistence on a federal system of governance, according to Ibrahim Ssemuju Nganda (2004).

9.2.1 Coronation of Kabaka Muwenda Mutebi II

The coronation of Muwenda Mutebi II as the 36th Kabaka of Buganda was a historical event because it had been more than half a century since the last coronation event at which Edward Muteesa II was crowned following the death of his father Kabaka Daudi Chwa II on November 22, 1939.³ Despite the significant time lag since the previous coronation, it was amazing to note that the basic royal accession rituals have been maintained; certainly with a few variations, but not too significant to alter the process or the meaning of this important ritual.⁴

On the day of Mutebi II's coronation, Nnaggalabi hill, the cultural site where the Baganda kings are enthroned, was browned in bark-cloth. As according to the customs of the Baganda, a royal carpet (*ekiwu*) comprising of the cow skin, a lion skin, and a leopard skin was laid on a piece of bark-cloth upon which was placed the *Nnamulondo* (royal stool). The Katikkiro (prime minister) of Buganda (then), Joash Mayanja Nkangi led Mutebi II and his *Lubuga*, *Nnaalinya* Nnabaloga to the coronation spot. The Mugema, head of the nkima (monkey) clan, who serves as the Kabaka's guardian, then took the Kabaka by the hand and led him to stand on the *Nnamulondo*. Taking a piece of bark-cloth handed over to him by Kaboggoza, the royal bark-cloth maker of the *ngonge* (otter clan), Mugema⁵ knotted (toga style) the bark-cloth at the right shoulder of the Kabaka.

³ F. Lukyn Williams gives an account of the burial ceremony of Ssekabaka Chwa II, which took place on November 25 at the Royal Tombs of Kasubi-Nnabulagala in Kyaddondo County, and the enthronement of Kabaka Muteesa II, that same day at Mengo palace (1939: 181-182).

⁴ For example, Mutebi's accession to the throne was preceded by a mock battle with Semanobe, guardian of the Buddo hill, where the Buganda kings are enthroned. The mock-battle was meant to enact Kintu's historical conquest of Buganda.

⁵ Mugema, of the monkey (*nkima*) clan plays a parental role as guardian of the Kabaka. He is also responsible for the royal death and succession ceremonies.

Enrobing the Kabaka in bark-cloth entrusts him with full authority over the ancient kingdom of Buganda, which is said to have been founded by Kintu, who is also credited (according to some theories) for having introduced the technology of bark-cloth making, which initially came to be identified with Buganda royalty. As he performed this ritual, Mugema declared to Mutebi II that, “You are His Majesty the King who will reign over the Kingdom of Buganda” (“Gwe Kabaka anaafuganga Obuganda”). He then proceeded to drape a calf-skin over the Kabaka’s bark-cloth, ululating words of courage to the Kabaka. The calf-skin symbolises Kimera’s centrality to the continuity of the royal dynasty. It should be recalled that Kimera was summoned from Bunyoro, to come and take over the throne of his father Chwa Nabakka, who had “disappeared”. Oral tradition asserts that Kimera arrived in Buganda while dressed in calfskin.

Next, Kasujju Lubinga, the official caretaker of the princes came forward and enrobed the Kabaka with a second piece of bark-cloth, which he knotted over his left shoulder. The two-piece bark-cloth attire articulates the Kabaka’s title, as the *Ssaabalongo* (Head of fathers of twins). Lubinga then dressed Kabaka Mutebi II in a leopard skin, the symbol of royalty and superiority over his subjects. Thereafter, the *Katikkiro* handed him a shield and two spears, the official symbols of Kabaka Mutebi II’s appointment to the highest office in Buganda. The shield and spear signified the Kabaka’s readiness to defend his country against the enemy, and to make fair judgment at all times. Plate 9.1 illustrates the regalia of Kabaka Mutebi II, on the day of his coronation.



Plate 9.1 Coronation of Kabaka Muwenda Mutebi II at Nnaggalabi Buddo, Busiro County
Courtesy of P.N Ssengendo

Because of its cultural importance, Kabaka Mutebi II's coronation anniversary has become an annual event⁶ and on each occasion, bark-cloth has featured prominently across the spectrum among people of various social backgrounds. Of specific interest to the current research, are the various ways in which people in Buganda have made use of bark-cloth to celebrate the coronation. The present discussion draws examples from the 9th Coronation anniversary celebrations, which I attended during the last week of July 2002 at the Kabaka's main palace of Mengo in Kyaddondo County. At the palace grounds, a weeklong cultural exhibition was organized to mark the anniversary, and over thirty out of the fifty-two clans of Buganda displayed indigenous knowledge of, and technical skills in, different crafts including among others: bark-cloth making, leatherwork, beadwork, and ironwork. The festival was a rare opportunity, for it brought together the Baganda of different social hierarchies including royals, clan leaders and ordinary men and women, many of whom, irrespective of age, class or gender, sported garments and accessories made out of bark-cloth. The Kabaka himself presided over the ceremony clad in his ceremonial royal attire, comprising of bark-cloth and a leopard skin, draped over the *kanzu*, and his pavilion was fully lined in bark-cloth. Several clan leaders and other Baganda males holding various offices in the kingship system were dressed in bark-cloth draped in the usual toga style over the *kanzu*, the current official dress of the Baganda males, and the *kooti* (Western jacket) as illustrated in plates 9.2 and 9.3. Whereas this ceremonial style of dress by the Baganda males in the service of the Kabaka

⁶ The 10th coronation anniversary celebrations which were due to take place on July 31, 2004 at Kayunga in Bugerere County were cancelled due to the failed discussions between the representatives of the Kingdom of Buganda and the central government over the quest for limited political and economic autonomy of Buganda (*federo*). Consequently, the kingdom declared three days meant for the coronation anniversary celebrations (from Friday 30th to Sunday 1st August 2004) as days of 'mourning' marked by prayers in all churches and mosques in Buganda. A local journal reported that the Baganda were meant "to wear barkcloth around their waists as a sign of mourning" (*The Weekly Observer*, July 29th 2004).

has remained fairly unchanged, in recent years, a few officials have begun to dress in smaller strips of bark-cloth, tacked together with a pin (plate 9.2, first from the right) as opposed to the tradition of draping by way of knotting, in a full length of bark-cloth. Nonetheless, this change in style of dress has not altered significantly the cultural significance of bark-cloth. Moreover, Edward Shils, a theorist on tradition, reminds us that, “Practically all actions entail some deviation from or some independence of tradition” (1981: 330).



Plate 9.2 Royal bark-cloth makers of the *ngonge* (otter) clan clad in bark-cloth and the *kanzu*.
9th Coronation Anniversary at Mengo Palace, July 31st 2002.
Photo by the author



Plate 9.3 Royal bark-cloth makers of the *ngonge* (otter) clan of Mawokota County, at the 9th coronation anniversary. From left: Expedito Ssenkungu Muyigula of Kyanja; Petero Kabogozza of Nsangwa, and Ssaalongo Ssembatya *ow'omutuba* (head of the sub-lineage) of Muganga, located in Ffunvu, Mawokota.

Photo by the author

Shil further argues that, “there is nothing intrinsically bad and nothing intrinsically good about [changing traditions]” although, as he adds, “sometimes a new and great good [,] results from an action of courageous innovation” (ibid: 330). In the next two sections, I examine some of the courageous and innovative ways in which some people in Buganda have re-defined bark-cloth, for cultural, aesthetic as well as economic reasons. I will start by analyzing the innovations in the application of bark-cloth during the coronation anniversary events.

9.2.2 Innovation in the Use of Bark-cloth during the Coronation Anniversary Events

Significant innovations in the use of bark-cloth during the coronation anniversary events have been observed especially among the ordinary Baganda, who have interpreted the coronation, based on their own lived experiences. During the coronation anniversary celebrations in 2002, I observed many ordinary Baganda people dressed in garments and fashion accessories made out of bark-cloth ranging from Western-styled jackets, wrappers, neckties, caps, sashes, to academic attire (gown and mortarboard). A few of such examples have been illustrated in plates 9.3 to 9.7. However, a critical analysis of these garments and accessories highlights a complex set of meanings underpinning this act of dress, which contributes in significant modes to the notion of change and retention in the symbolic value of bark-cloth. Susan B. Kaiser, a social psychologist and specialist in the psychology of dress, has made the following remarks that are quite relevant to this study. She stated:

It is hard to imagine how clothing as a subject matter could be more visible, relevant, and meaningful on an everyday basis- and yet so taken for granted...Clothes help us to make sense of our social experiences. In the process, clothes influence: (a) how we shape and represent our identities as we manage our appearances, (b) how we interact with other people in groups or communities, and (c) how we are influenced by, and contribute to, the cultures and times in which we live (1997: vii).

Making reference to Kaiser's important remarks enables us to assess the meanings derived from the sartorial acts that involve the use of bark-cloth. How we shape and represent our identities, especially in the last two decades, has had a lot to do with local as well as global influences. By global influences or globalisation, I refer to the increased transfer of and access to information and ideas across geographical and cultural boundaries through international travel, via the mass media (radio, newspapers,

magazines, and television, audio and visual recordings) and most recently, via the internet. The outcome has been the overflow of foreign ideologies and cultures that have prejudiced local perceptions regarding self-identity, which in the process have impacted on the mode of local cultural production and expression.

To substantiate my argument, let me make reference to two international cultural activities that have had a direct influence on the production of objects out of bark-cloth albeit for local consumption. These are: 1) the ideology of “Miss World” beauty contests, and 2) the culture of international sports. Based on observation, the sash, an important symbol of beauty pageantry, has in the last decade penetrated the dress vocabulary of the Baganda (especially women and children) serving as a sign of celebration of the *amatikkira* (coronation) of Kabaka Muwenda Mutebi II as plates 9.4, 9.5 and 9.6 illustrate.



Plate 9.4 The bark-cloth sash, that has become a popular dress item at the Coronation anniversary celebrations of Kabaka Mutebi II. Venue: Mu Ggulu e Mukono, Kyaggwe County. 1/8/2001. Photo by the author



Plate 9.5 Baganda women dressed in *busuuti*, the traditional attire but, are also sporting baseball caps made out of bark-cloth. 9th Coronation Anniversary, 3/8/2002
Venue: Lubiri- Mengo, Kyaddondo County. Photo by the author



Plate 9.6 Diana Nnambogo Mpendo and Ruth Ssempe dressed in bark-cloth
9th coronation anniversary Venue: Lubiri, Kyaddondo County 3/8/2002
Photo by the author

Whereas the sash has always been part of the costume of the Baganda women who tie it around the waist in order to hold in place the drapery of the *busuuti* (plate 9.5), its application around the shoulder and chest is a new phenomenon. I attribute this sartorial paradigm shift to global cultural infusion. It is an undisputable fact that the sash has in the past century been closely associated with the cultural ideology of “beauty pageantry” (or Miss World as the event is popularly known), a Western concept that has been widely publicized through the mass media. The contestants usually appear before the public gaze, for the first time while wearing sashes indicating the countries where they originate. At the end of the event, the winner is crowned.

In the past decade, beauty contests have become a popular event in Uganda organized at a national level (Miss Uganda), at the local administrative divisions (towns and local councils) for instance, Miss Kampala or Miss Mbale or Miss Kawempe, and within the institutions of higher learning. For example, the crowning of Miss Makerere University has become an annual event publicized on radio and in the newspapers, and the event attracts funding from big companies that take an opportunity to advertise their products. It is not uncommon for the winners to be rewarded heavily in form of brand new cars, mobile phones, or cash, and they usually are given special privileges (for the period they hold the beauty title).

To be crowned as the most beautiful or among the most beautiful has social, economic and political advantages, which tend to augment the power of the winner. Among the Baganda, until the twentieth-century, the crown, and its associated social, economic and political capital, was a privilege of the Kabaka, the *Ssaabasajja* (the Man among men). Hence, in this case, popular culture is being used to re-articulate a

“traditional” ritual. Wearing the sash can be interpreted as an easier way for the younger generation, who constitute the majority among the followers of the “cult” of beauty pageantry, to articulate the significance of the coronation anniversary based on their own lived experiences, which are actually a manifestation of a cultural *mélange* of the local and global traditions. Kaiser has warned us that “More than ever ... it [has become] necessary for individuals to work at constructing their identities...[However], given the eclectic range of possibilities for personal expression, individuals [as well as groups of people] may intermingle and juxtapose diverse appearance signs [thereby rendering] the potential for symbolic ambiguity [real] (1997: 537).

Further, the baseball cap, a popular sportswear item, has found a lot of attraction among many people who participate in the coronation anniversary celebrations. Whereas its application in the context of the Buganda coronation anniversary celebrations has nothing to do with sports, the baseball cap serves at a functional level as a protection from the scorching sun, and symbolically, it serves as a marker of community identity and as a fashion statement. Plate 9.5, for example, demonstrates a group of Baganda women dressed in *busuuti*, the “traditional” attire, but also wearing baseball caps redesigned out of bark-cloth. We should be reminded that because of gender differentiation, it is still considered uncouth for women in Buganda to wear hats or any other garments associated with the male gender. Women are instead more accustomed to wearing the headscarf. Yet, at events of cultural importance, the baseball cap made of bark-cloth has become a fashionable product transcending gender boundaries. The point not to be missed here is that whereas the revival of the bark-cloth as a dress tradition is to a greater extent, intended to highlight the importance of the restoration of the Buganda

monarchy, it also communicates at a broader level, the varying factors that have continually shaped and redefined the way many people in Buganda perceive themselves; in relation to other societies, as by the twenty-first century.

It should be pointed out that the coronation anniversary celebrations attract many people from various regions of Buganda, who may not necessarily be of Ganda ethnic origin. Besides, many cultures have adopted the *busuuti*, a costume of the Baganda. It is therefore, arguable that sporting baseball caps and other dress accessories made out of bark-cloth, may be identified with being a Muganda. As Kaiser has reminded us, “Often, it is not simply *what* we wear that displays who we are. Rather, it is *how* we wear it - and in what contexts - that conveys the most meanings” (ibid: 545). Further analysis on this subject is still required.

Apart from beauty contests and sports, Western education is another factor that has influenced local perceptions in relation to the coronation event and the associated use of bark-cloth. In Luganda, language of the Baganda, the coronation event is referred to as *amatikkira ga Kabaka* yet the term *amatikkira* is also used to refer to graduation ceremonies. In this respect, there has been a cross-interpretation of meaning between these two concepts (graduation and coronation). In the process, the mortarboard, an academic cap with a stiff, square top and tassel, has become a popular dress item on coronation anniversary events. Plate 9.6 not only illustrates how the mortarboard has been appropriated in the medium of bark-cloth in order to convey meanings relating to such local cultural events like the coronation anniversary celebrations, but it also demonstrates how the medium of bark-cloth has been ideologically transformed to represent change in local perspectives about the notion of self or group identity, as well

as personal achievements, social values, and social aspirations. Diana Nnambogo Mpendo, and Ruth Ssempe, both graduates of Makerere University, shown in this plate are some of the young people in Buganda who have appropriated some elements of the graduation attire, and put them in a new context. Their attire communicates different layers of meanings relating to their social experiences, but at the same time, reflecting their association with the kingship system. By wearing a bark-cloth wrapper draping down to the ankles, the two young women conform to the local values which stress concealment of sensual parts of the woman's body, and yet, by wearing sashes over their shoulders, they reflect their conformity to the "beauty culture" of the twenty-first century. The mortarboard emphatically stresses their elite position in society; Mpendo is a computer scientist while Ssempe is a specialist in environmental science. Explaining the rationale behind their choice of dress and appearance on the coronation, Ssempe emphasized, "We decided to wear bark-cloth in order to visually express our association with the Buganda monarchy. You know people tend to think that once one attains higher qualifications then one ceases to recognize and appreciate local traditions. Our view is that having Western education, like in our case, a university degree, only makes one more aware of those important cultural elements in our society that ought to be preserved and celebrated" (Ssempe, interview, August, 2002). Nevertheless, the way in which these two ladies have re-constructed their identity using bark-cloth as a medium only strengthens my earlier argument that the concept of coronation, and the use of bark-cloth, in the twenty-first century, has largely been shaped by transformation in social-cultural experiences nurtured by global influences.

Apart from dress, bark-cloth has also been used more directly as a medium of communication. In chapter six, it was noted that from the time of the Kabaka's return, triumphal arches, *ebiyitirirwa* (*ekiyitirirwa* sing.), decorated with bark-cloth, became a distinctive design feature in Buganda. These were erected whenever, and wherever, the Kabaka went to visit his subjects. Even in the twenty-first century, this practice is still observed. Plate 9.7 illustrates the *kiyitirirwa* erected in 2002 at Mengo Palace, in commemoration of the ninth coronation anniversary.



Plate 9.7 *Ekiyitirirwa* erected at Mengo Palace to celebrate the 9th Coronation anniversary (2002)

Photo by the author

Emile Durkheim, a sociologist who stresses the benefits of society for the individual, observes the importance of material things in conveying specific ideas and sentiments. He argues that things exhibit a certain dialectical quality in that they are invested with meaning but may themselves be integral to the reproduction of ideas that contribute to group unity in time and space (as cited in Elisha P. Renne 1995: 6). Similarly, Anette B. Weiner and Jane Schneider, textiles historians, have also stressed that, “to seek the symbolic potentialities of cloth in its material properties is... but a preliminary step... equally important [to observe] are the human actions that make cloth politically and socially salient” (1989:3). As a cultural artefact, bark-cloth is already invested with various meanings relating to the norms and values of the Baganda. But its meaning is even further emphasized when bark-cloth is applied in modern communication design, in tandem with type and image, to convey specific cultural information, as is currently the case with the triumphal arches. It should be recalled that the *ebiyitirirwa* entered the design vocabulary of the Baganda during the mid-twentieth century as a marker of ‘political triumph’ of the Baganda over their colonial administrators. The increased literacy rate in Buganda ever since, and the access to basic art and design education, has rendered bark-cloth and the *ebiyitirirwa* more communicative. However, it still remains to be answered how the display of bark-cloth in the outside environment impacts on its historical-cultural functions, which were primarily indoors, as earlier discussed in chapter three.

It was important to note that the meaning of bark-cloth has continued to be re-interpreted a decade after the restoration of the Buganda monarchy. In the next section, I analyse how various social categories in Buganda have contributed to the transformation

of bark-cloth both for economic as well as aesthetic purposes. To begin with, I consider the economic dimensions of bark-cloth-related products.

9.3 The Market Place: Global Influences on Bark-cloth

My analysis of the economic impact on bark-cloth is based on the research findings from my visits to several marketing centres in Kampala (Kyaddondo county), which at the moment, serves as the biggest outlet for bark-cloth designed products. Visits to Musigula Market, which is the main marketing outlet of bark-cloth in Kampala, the Uganda Cultural Village, African Exposure 2000, Uganda Crafts, Kasubi Tombs, and the craft store for the National Association of the Women of Uganda NAWOU in Kampala were most significant. During my visit to these places, a variety of bark-cloth products were on display, ranging from picture frames, coasters, purses, baseball caps, pillows, sandals, earrings and bangles, jackets and waist coats, hats, briefcases, ladies handbags, to paintings and wall hangings. The majority of these objects have been designed to target the “tourist”⁷ market, although some limited products also appeal to local consumers; for example, the hand bags shown in plate 9.8.

⁷ The Oxford English Dictionary defines a “tourist” as “one who travels for pleasure or culture, visiting a number of places for their objects of interest, scenery or the like”. Since 1800 when the term first appeared in print, and applied in agricultural terms to refer to a person who took note of the size and composition of fields, the interpretation of a tourist has been transformed, and the term is now charged with negative connotations, because of the increased accessibility to travel, by ordinary people. As such, a system of art production has been developed by local producers, who attempt to represent aspects of their own cultures to meet the expectations of the tourists, who treat art as an example of the exotic. Detailed analysis of tourist art as a semiotic system is provided by Jules Rosette Bennetta (1984), in her publication, *Messages of Tourist Art: an African semiotic system in Comparative Perspective*.



Plate 9.8 Crafts products made out of bark-cloth. H x W x D: Handbags approx. 16 x 21 x 3cm. Shopping bag 33 x 38 x 7cm. Uganda Craft Village (Kyaddondo County), Courtesy of Bruno Sserunkuuma



Plate 9.9 Bark-cloth craft producers of Mukono, Kyaggwe County. From left: Amina Kabengano, Edisa Namisango, Rovinca Nambasa, and Namwandu Nkata, courtesy of Bruno Sserunkuuma

My discussion with some of the craft producers gave me an insight into their personal experiences in the craft industry, and their own conceptions about tourist expectations. I interviewed a group of women, who are actively involved in the practice of bark-cloth embroidery. Amina Kabengano, Edisa Namisango, Rovinca Nambasa and Namwandu Nkata represented in plate 9.9 are from Mukono in Kyaggwe County but they come together every Friday at the Uganda Craft Village, the main craft outlet in Kampala (Kyaddondo County), in order to market their craft products, and to collect payment from the dealers for their goods sold during the week. Even though they are not unified under any umbrella organization, these women work together and share ideas and skills during the few hours they spend together at the Craft Village even though at home, each of the ladies works individually. These four ladies interviewed specialise in embroidery, a skill they have developed over a period of time. Namwandu Nkata informed me that she has been making crafts out of bark-cloth since the 1960s yet Nambasa, Namisango and Kabengano joined the craft industry in the mid-1980s. In addition to the embroidered bark-cloth craft products, these mothers also market a few printed wall hangings for their children (Kyewalabye Robert, Kawuki Ronald and Kasozi Yusufu) who were still at school. It is important to note the difference in technique and product between the work of these ladies and that of their sons. While the former concentrate on “traditional” embroidery skills, using local materials, the influence of such modern craft techniques like screen-printing that have become a common subject in secondary schools has of late, provided a variation in the bark-cloth products.

When asked why they do not try out new techniques, the ladies informed me that printing and painting is a man’s job, and besides, they were happy to continue with the

skills they have known for a long time instead of venturing into new creative territories that are fast getting flooded by the younger generation. “Since bark-cloth embroidery skills are not taught at school, and because children spend most of the time at school, they never get to learn our skills thus leaving us very few in the embroidery industry, which in a way is an advantage” (Nkata, interview 2001). As regards the sources of inspiration for their crafts, they confirmed that they have been working on established patterns that are well known to attract tourists and that they tend to respond to comments from the middlemen who market their products. However, when I asked one of the craft mediators at the Craft Village in Kampala, the response they get from tourists as regards the bark-cloth products, she told me that tourists rarely comment on the products; “they just buy if something arouses their interest, and sometimes, they buy products that seem to be most outrageous in subject matter, or of the poorest quality. So, for us we just stock anything, because everything in this store is destined to have a buyer, it is just a matter of time before that buyer finally appears” (Nnaalongo Mbazzi, interview, February, 2001). In fact, the lack of adequate information by the crafts producers, as regards the client needs, quality control, the type of products that appeal to the tourist population, coupled with the pressing need to generate supplementary income, often results in products of variable quality.

Jules-Rosette Bennetta, a scholar and analyst of tourist art has pointed out that “art producers attempt to anticipate and manipulate the meaning systems of the tourists and other consumers in order to market their goods. Tourist art mirrors the consumers’ expectations and reveals the artists’ perceptions of what consumers want” (1984: 3). Plate 9.10 underpins Bennetta’s argument in an important way because the camel, which has

been applied as the main motif on this particular artefact intended for sale to the tourists is not a common animal in Uganda.



Plate 9.10 Crafts products made out of bark-cloth, Women Craft Project Kayabwe in Mawokota County
Document Folder, H x W x D: 34x 32 x 3cm, Photo by the author

However, this recent appropriation of bark-cloth raises a highly charged and emotional debate among scholars and the Baganda themselves. On the one hand, the commodification of bark-cloth, and the production of “tourist” objects, has been criticized by some informants because of its demeaning tendencies to the cultural value of bark-cloth. On the other hand, it was noted that although some of the “tourist” objects are demeaning, the commodification process has in some respects helped to reconstruct and highlight the aesthetic and historical importance of bark-cloth to the local and international community. The issue became even more problematic because of gender

implications, since it was mainly male informants who attributed the profanation of bark-cloth to women. arguing that they [women] are the major producers of bark-cloth-craft-products in Buganda. One informant commented: “bark-cloth was a very valuable product [and textile technology] in the history of Buganda. But since the [social, economic and political] changes, which prompted women to begin making crafts out of bark-cloth, its cultural value has completely been lost...” (“Olubugo kye kintu eky’omuwendo kye twalina wano mu Buganda, era nga lwakozesebwanga mu mikolo egy’enjawulo egikwata ku Buganda. Naye emirembe bwe gyakyuuka, bano abakyala nebatandika n’okukolamu eby’emikono, olubugo terukyalina makulu n’akatono bwe kati”). The views of this informant were not dissimilar to those of many conservative Baganda, especially in the royal domain, who maintained that bark-cloth was not only a sacred fabric but also a symbol of power, and power relations in pre-colonial Buganda.

However, I question why the recent appropriation of bark-cloth design products by many Baganda during the coronation anniversary ceremonies, and other cultural events has not been considered contradictory to the indigenous beliefs of the Baganda. Francis Nnaggenda, a Ugandan artist and a supporter of the revival of bark-cloth comments that “bark-cloth actually projects our past, our history and ... it also projects the artistic talents of our people [the Baganda]”. In a rather soft yet emotional tone. he further states: “I would hate to see it [bark-cloth] disappear because it is something [a fabric] which has enjoyed the passage of time and...you know...it is living” (interview, February 2002). Similarly, Peter Kivumbi, a bark-cloth maker and trader from Buddu asserts that crafts-persons have helped to revive the bark-cloth industry because through

their products, more attention and publicity has been paid to the industry in the past decade (interview, June 2002).

9.4 Politics of Scarcity and the Introduction of Bark-cloth in Art Education

In spite of the fact that bark-cloth has been a medium of tourist art in Buganda since the early 1960s, it was not until the 1990s, thirty years later, that bark-cloth became a subject of academic enquiry in formal art institutions in Uganda. Because of its significance as a shroud, and due to its centrality in the indigenous religious cultural practices, bark-cloth became emotionally charged so that its potential as a medium of artistic expression was never fully explored until recently. To pursue the artistic innovations in bark-cloth, I visited several art institutions in and around Kampala including: Makerere University, Kyambogo University, and Nkumba University. July and August was timely for the visit because it is the period when the undergraduate and post-graduate students' end-of-year art exhibitions are normally held. During my visit, I was also able to access some of the artworks produced by previous students. Since the foundation for art training in Uganda was built on Western art concepts and values, the use of local materials like bark-cloth in art pedagogy in tertiary institutions is a relatively new phenomenon. This innovation has been triggered partly by economic factors that have constrained the resources available to academic institutions in Uganda, since the 1970s.

9.4.1 Cultural Artefacts at Makerere Art School?

It has already been noted that at the Margaret Trowell School of Art, presently called the Margaret Trowell School of Industrial and Fine Arts (MTSIFA) in Makerere

University, students were not encouraged to use cultural artefacts in their pictorial compositions. The instructors were predominantly of Western origin and therefore, their own background in art compelled them to employ methods and materials they were already familiar with. In the consequence, the *bark-cloth phobia* lingered on in the art school, even after the departure of the expatriate staff during the 1970s when the political situation in Uganda worsened under Amin's regime. Because of the political unrest and the economic slump that followed, reaching its peak during the 1980s, the staff at Makerere art school found it impossible to continue with the curriculum inherited from the European founders. Materials and resources had become highly competitive across all sectors, yet the Government contribution to the art school, and Makerere University in general, had become heavily restrained because of the civil war. Against this background, a new line of thought was advanced that paved the way for the liberalization of the art curriculum in order to match it with the changing needs of society. The political-economic situation inevitably called for improvisation in many aspects and the art school was by no means going to be an exception. Because of import restrictions and lack of sufficient funds, instructors at the Makerere art school found it increasingly difficult to obtain the necessary art materials (sourced from abroad) in order to run their courses. Students were henceforth encouraged to experiment with locally sourced materials and artefacts. What was born out of necessity, culminated in a new genre of visual art production, which has significantly contributed to the mediation of bark-cloth, as I will discuss shortly.

9.4.2 Nnaggenda's Contribution to the Use of Local Materials at Makerere Art School

Francis Nnaggenda, an instructor in sculpture, championed this ideology when he started to reclaim and make use of a wide collection of discarded objects from his immediate environment ranging from scrap metal, felled trees and wood-off-cuts to worn-out household objects like broken furniture and old saucepans. Out of these, he made highly expressive pieces of sculpture, which caught the attention of his students and colleagues. Though he trained as a sculptor in Germany, and had worked for sometime in Kenya and the United States, Nnaggenda's style of work had a lot to do with West African sculptural traditions, which celebrated the use of varied and sometimes discordant materials. Hence, when he joined the staff of Makerere art school in 1978, a period when the economic and political crisis was at its peak, Nnaggenda swiftly adjusted to the scarcity of art materials and encouraged his students to become conscious of the aesthetic possibilities of scrap material in their surroundings and guided them in making sculptural assemblage with these found objects. While his contribution was most evident in the field of sculpture, his approach and encouragement to the students paved the way for further experimentation with other materials and artefacts like bark-cloth. A few attempts to integrate local materials and artefacts in art pedagogy, had been made by earlier instructors in ceramics like John Francis during the 1960s, and George Ssizoomu during the late 1970s, but the significant ideological divisions between art and craft that pre-occupied academic debates at Makerere art school had made it impossible for this line of approach to be carried forward (Ssempangi, interview, October, 2002; Musoke, interview, October, 2002). By the 1990s, the use of local materials had been fully

integrated in the art curriculum at Makerere and bark-cloth had begun to feature in the artworks by students and staff, especially in painting, sculpture and the applied arts.

9.5 Restoration of the Buganda Monarchy and the Appropriation of Bark-cloth at Makerere Art School

The restoration of the Buganda monarchy and the coronation of Kabaka Mutebi II in 1993 aroused a feeling of cultural renaissance in Buganda and thus gave many artists and designers an impetus to appropriate local material culture, particularly bark-cloth, in their various practices. It is, therefore, no coincidence that even the art collection in the medium of bark-cloth at Makerere Art Gallery begins in the same year. Since the coronation, bark-cloth, a significant symbol of the Baganda, has become a 'medium' of expression as well as a canvas onto which is inscribed various narratives about, or inspired from Buganda's cultural past and present. In this study, I have singled out fourteen artists, mainly students and staff of the Makerere Art School (including the author) whose work gives a representation of the academic influence on the transformation of the functions and meaning of bark-cloth. What is worth noting is the extent to which artists have drawn on the training received in the various disciplines, in order to redefine bark-cloth in a unique and individualized style, as I proceed to discuss in the rest of this section.

Patrick Lwasampijja's *Ekitiibwa kya Buganda* (plate 9.11) is among the earliest artworks in the medium of bark-cloth, in the collection of Makerere Art Gallery. Lwasampijja represents Nnaggenda's ideological influence in the field of sculpture, and exemplifies the usage of bark-cloth in this art discipline. Lwasampijja was a student of Nnaggenda at the undergraduate level from 1990 to 1993. As part of his final year

exhibition, Lwasampijja made a relief sculptural composition out of locally available materials including bark-cloth. In the *Ekitiibwa kya Buganda*, Lwasampijja employs a selection of timber off-cuts of various types, sizes, and finish, together with copper sheets in order to make an artistic statement about the history of Buganda, which he summarizes using three basic symbols namely; bark-cloth, a symbol of identity of the Baganda; the cowry shell, which symbolizes wealth⁸; and the shield, a symbol of power. Lwasampijja organizes his relief-sculpture by arranging pieces of wood in form of a shield, and copper sheets cut out of a cowry shape onto a board mounted with bark-cloth. He deliberately tones down the bark-cloth into sombre shades of brown to enable him to achieve a contrasting effect, which not only enhances his composition, but also enables us to analyse his work from a historical perspective.

⁸ The cowry was the major currency in Buganda and the rest of the East African interior until the end of the nineteenth-century.



Plate 9.11 Patrick Lwasampijja, *Ekitiibwa kya Buganda*,
Relief sculpture in wood, copper and bark-cloth (1993),
95cm x 200cm. Makerere Art Gallery, Kampala, Photo by the author

It is indisputable that *Ekitiibwa kya Buganda* was inspired by the then current cultural events associated with the Buganda monarchy. But a critical analysis of this artwork also enables us to reflect on the historical issues relating to the bark-cloth industry of the Baganda, which is at the centre of our current discussion. By toning down the intensity of bark-cloth, Lwasampijja gives it an “aged” look that takes us centuries back into the history of Buganda. He ironically casts a shadow onto the history of bark-cloth in Buganda yet, at the same time, by projecting the cowry and the shield in

significant proportions, he reminds us of the centrality of bark-cloth in the political and economic history of Buganda.

It is important to note that Nnaggenda not only inspired his students but also his colleagues. Pilkington Nsibambi Ssengendo, an instructor in painting, joined Nnaggenda in this visual research informed by the ideology of improvisation. He centred his investigation on the use of non-conventional materials in painting. On his part, Ssengendo put specific emphasis on exploring the possibilities of local artefacts in pictorial construction. Ssengendo had his art training in painting at Makerere art school in the early 1960s during the era of Prof. Todd⁹, who took over from Margaret Trowell. In an interview with him, Ssengendo acknowledged that as a student at Makerere art school, he never had an opportunity to explore the possibilities of using local artefacts as a basis for pictorial composition in painting. But when he travelled to Britain in 1967 to attend a symposium on African art, organized by the London University School of Oriental and African Studies, he realized that “West African artists had their art situated in their indigenous culture, which was not the case with me, and with those from East Africa...because we felt at that time that we did not have a strong artistic tradition, which was a mistake” (interview, July 2002).

⁹ Todd was a graduate of the Royal College of Art in London and at the time of his appointment to head the Makerere art school, he was a Professor of painting at a “white” South African university of Rhodes. He therefore had little interaction (if any) with “Black” African culture and did not hold esteemed respect for Trowell’s approach to art education. For him he was more interested in equipping his students with concrete creative skills based on Western concepts of art that he knew very well, and therefore did not open up space on the curriculum for experimentation with indigenous arts, or the teaching of their histories. For a detailed discussion on Todd’s teaching philosophy, see (Sanyal 2000; Kasule 2002; Kyeyune 2003).

However, it was not until the coronation of Kabaka Mutebi II that Ssengendo was attuned to the aesthetic attributes of bark-cloth.¹⁰ He attended the coronation and was intrigued by the extensive usage of bark-cloth, an artefact he initially considered with less admiration, as he admits, because of the phobia that surrounded it. Ssengendo has a royal background and comes from Kyaddondo, one of the original counties of Buganda but he did not get the opportunity to appreciate the aesthetic value of bark-cloth until later in his life. He grew up in a staunch Anglican family, and his father was a minister (pastor), whose religious background held in contempt, such local artefacts as bark-cloth because of the “satanic” connotations appended to them by the first missionaries. However, having attended the coronation of Kabaka Mutebi II, Ssengendo felt that there was something artistic in the bark-cloth that he had ignored for so long. As he explained to me:

Initially, I had a very negative attitude about bark-cloth because I associated it with burial, funerals, wrapping dead bodies...but here was a happy event in which we all used this artefact in one way or another. Since the coronation, I began to develop, in my art, positive concepts about bark-cloth, its historical implications, and I also use it in its physicality. I became more interested in expressing my indigenous culture through my paintings. I am actually writing my culture visually (ibid).

In fact, Ssengendo was not the only artist who initially had negative feelings about bark-cloth; several artists, as I will discuss shortly, acknowledged that they had never contemplated using bark-cloth in their art practice because of its association with death. However, it is this very aura of fear, which still circulates especially among the younger generation that made some artists (who belong to the Baganda ethnic group, as well as some non-Baganda) to become more curious to explore the potentiality of bark-cloth in

¹⁰ In fact, Ssengendo is currently undertaking a doctoral project relating to the conceptual and aesthetic possibilities of bark-cloth in painting.

communicating deeper meaning about life (Igala, interview, February, 2001; Jenny Namuwonge Kyeyune, interview, October, 2002). Likewise, this *bark-cloth phobia* made some others realize that bark-cloth was inescapably, ‘the connecting symbol’ between life and death, and therefore a necessary icon in visual representation of the traditions of the past and present (Kasule, interview, September, 2002).

Edward Shils highlights two major categories of change namely: 1) the endogenous change that is initiated from within one’s immediate environment, and 2) the exogenous change, which comes as a result of alien influence (1981: chapters 5 and 6). In Ssengendo’s case, it was more of a combination of the two. On the one hand, having travelled out of Uganda to an alien place where he interacted with other artists of a different background enabled him to reflect on his own cultural background which, he had been made to believe was almost non-existent, and of an inferior quality. On the other hand, having had the opportunity to witness an important cultural event of the Baganda society, of which he is a member, Ssengendo was able to overwrite the negative ideologies about bark-cloth which he had assumed through his cultural past, and is currently engaged in trying to discover and redefine the array of aesthetic possibilities which this fabric offers.

Ssengendo employs three main approaches in his visual research on bark-cloth: 1) He makes use of bark-cloth as a canvas onto which he paints his compositions; 2) he engages bark-cloth in particular sections of his paintings by bonding or stitching the bark fabric onto canvas during the early stages of his pictorial compositions; 3) by making use of oil paint on canvas or on board, he insinuates the physical and chemical properties of the *lubugo* and; 4) he employs a combination of two or all the three techniques above. He

has found special attraction in the bark-cloth because of its diversity in tones. As he states, “when I look at bark-cloth, my immediate reaction is painterly. I am fascinated by the vast range of hues; some are brown, some are yellow ochre and some tending towards yellow and so on but each of these has aesthetic possibilities for a painter” (Ssengendo, interview, July 2002). *My Heritage* (plate 9.12) exemplifies Ssengendo’s combinational approach. In this painting, inspired from the *olugero lwa Kintu ne Nambi* (Ganda mythological story of Kintu and Nambi), Ssengendo selects a female figure to symbolize the cultural heritage of the Baganda society.



Plate 9.12 Pilkington N. Ssengendo. *My Heritage*, oil on board and bark-cloth (1993)
Approx.70cm x 115cm. Artist’s studio, Makerere University, Photo by the author

According to the *olugero lwa Kintu ne Nambi*, a legend of the Baganda, Kintu was the first person on earth and he lived alone with his cow, which he tended to lovingly because it provided him with milk to feed on. But from time to time, sons of Ggulu, another being, who lived up in heaven, would come down on earth to play. One day, they brought their sister Nambi along with them, and it so happened that on that occasion, they came across Kintu grazing his cow. Because he was living such a solitary life on earth, Nambi felt pity for him and decided to stay on earth and marry him in order to give him company. However, her brothers insisted that if she wanted to marry him, she should take Kintu with her to heaven and seek her father's (Ggulu) permission, which she fortunately obtained. The story continues that Ggulu cautioned his daughter Nambi not to tell her troublesome brother Walumbe¹¹ about her plans to move to earth, as he would wish to join her there and was by all means going to cause her trouble in her marriage. Hence Nambi took her father's advice and left without Walumbe's knowledge. Unfortunately, while descending to earth, Nambi realized that she had left behind millet for her chicken (it seems she liked chicken and eggs very much) and begged her new husband, Kintu, that they return to heaven to fetch the millet. As it happened, Walumbe insisted on joining them and followed them all the way to earth. All went well in the beginning, according to the story, until Kintu and Nambi started having children. Walumbe then demanded that the couple should give him some of their children to assist him at home since he was living by himself. When the couple failed to honour Walumbe's requests, he started killing their children, and wrangles never stopped, but Nambi vowed to produce many more children than her troublesome brother Walumbe could afford to kill. Based on this narrative, the Baganda refer to them-selves as *abaana ba Nambi* (Nambi's children).

¹¹ "Walumbe" means that which causes sickness and death.

The above mythological story thus explains why Ssendendo chose the female figure for his composition. But it is also noteworthy that it is not a common practice among the Baganda women to expose their breasts in public, as has been represented in *My Heritage*. As noted earlier in this thesis, women in Buganda used to dress in bark-cloth wrapped from below their armpits draping down to their ankles yet, Ssendendo represents Nambi in semi-nudity. As he explained to me, the exposure of Nambi's bust was a conscious decision to emphasize Nambi's determination to pro-create and populate Buganda despite the death threats to her children from her awful brother Walumbe. Ssendendo borders the figure with bark-cloth in order to enhance the subject, and also to objectify the centrality of bark-cloth as a symbol of identity of the Baganda. Bark-cloth therefore not only acts as a backdrop or canvas on which Ssendendo deposits and projects his conceptual visual statements, but it becomes a central focus of his narrative. In a cubistic style, he consciously applies a range of sombre-browns, lush-greens and sky-blues, which are characteristic of the landscape of Buganda. Because it is not such a strong material as canvas, Ssendendo usually reinforces bark-cloth with natural gums and usually mounts it on board, or bonds it with other textile surfaces to give it extra strength.

9.5.1 Extending Academic Boundaries in the Use of Bark-cloth

In his visual search for deeper understanding of the *lubugo*, Ssendendo has encouraged his students to appreciate the cultural productions of the past and to draw inspiration from them, which in fact, was Trowell's legacy although the difference is that unlike Trowell, Ssendendo encourages his students, by example, to apply local material culture in its physicality, as well as conceptually, within their pictorial compositions.

Following in his immediate academic footsteps are: Richard Kabiito, Kizito-Maria Kasule, and Jenny Namuwonge Kyeyune.

Richard Kabiito is one of the first students who shared Ssengendo's aspirations in the use of bark-cloth and other material culture of the Baganda. Although at the time he joined the art school in 1989 as an undergraduate student, experimentation with local materials was already underway, it was several years later that Kabiito involved himself in this style of practice. His principle work on bark-cloth emerges from his M. A. (Fine Art) research project on the relevance of the material culture of the Baganda in painting, which he undertook between 1995 and 1997, and to which Ssengendo acted as his adviser. *Living in Harmony* (plate 9.13), is one of several painting collages that emanated from Kabiito's postgraduate research project. Having grown up in Buddu County, the leading producer of bark-cloth and other material culture especially mats and baskets, Kabiito had a wealth of information on the subject because he gained interest in these artefacts right from childhood, and had participated on many occasions in their production. Hence, when he had an opportunity to select the field of investigation for his graduate project, as he explained to me, he felt that he owed a lot to his culture and therefore, decided to use the local artefacts as a basis for his study. Moreover, Kabiito also admits that the timing for his research project was appropriate since the cultural atmosphere in Buganda was joyous because of the restoration of the monarchy, which in a way gave him further inspiration.

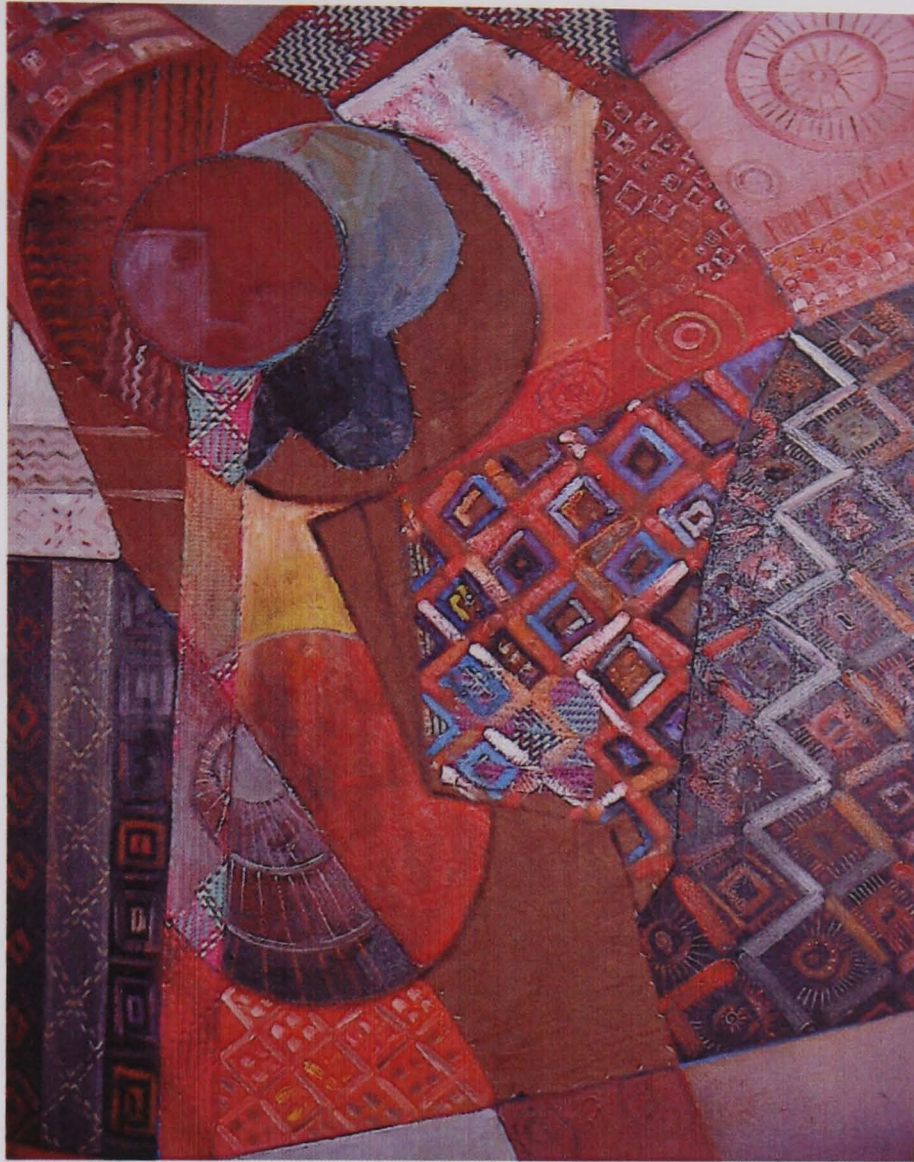


Plate 9.13 Richard Kabiito, *Living in Harmony*, oil, bark-cloth, and mats on canvas (1996), Approx. 100cm x 150cm. Private collection, Photo by the author

In the same way as Ssengendo, Kabiito employs collage and appliqué as his main compositional strategy although in his exploration of the visual qualities of the various cultural artefacts of the Baganda, he tends to emphasize texture and pattern as *Living in Harmony* illustrates. Thus, in addition to bark-cloth, *Kiganda* mats and baskets are some of the popular icons that Kabiito builds upon in order to make individual statements in his paintings. What is worth noting in *Living in Harmony* is the way he skilfully integrates the bark-cloth (as well as the mats) within the composition. In some areas, the plain bark-cloth features dominantly while in others, Kabiito intervenes by introducing pattern inspired from the mats, in a contrasting manner thereby creatively achieving a

harmonious and balanced composition. But we should not forget that in reconfiguring the bark-cloth in order to suit his aesthetic sensibilities, Kabiito also gives the bark-cloth new meaning. Bark-cloth thus ceases to be appreciated because of its cultural significance, but it serves in the same capacity as oils and canvas, in the general domain of visual culture.

Another artist that exemplifies Ssengendo's academic influence is Jenny Kyeyune Namuwonge who, like Kabiito, also originates in Buddu County. However, as opposed to Kabiito, Namuwonge is one of those artists who grew up with a phobia of bark-cloth and took a long time to appreciate its aesthetic quality. It was not until after her undergraduate studies that Igala Justine, a fellow artist and former classmate, encouraged her to explore the potential of bark-cloth. Igala Justine, himself does not originate in Buganda; he comes from Teso in the eastern region of Uganda but he always admired the bark-cloth of the Baganda and had begun exploring its artistic potential. Thus, in 1993 Namuwonge started by making a few craft objects out of bark-cloth, which she marketed through the craft village in Kampala. But when she returned to Makerere for her postgraduate studies, Namuwonge considered experimenting more with bark-cloth in her painting compositions. She uses bark-cloth as a medium to depict the life experience in the Buganda villages although in other cases, she employs bark-cloth purely because of its aesthetic merits.

Namuwonge began her creative adventures by reflecting on, and confronting the fear she had originally had about bark-cloth. In the *Portrait* (plate 9.14), Namuwonge tackles this phobia in a surrealist¹² style. On the one hand, the *Portrait*, as Namuwonge explained to me, is a representation of herself and her earlier fears about bark-cloth.

¹² Surrealism is a twentieth-century movement in art and literature seeking to reveal the inner world of fantasy and dreams by using distorted images.

However, on the other hand, the artwork portrays “death” the cause for the fear of bark-cloth by many people in Buganda, especially the younger generation (Namuwonge, interview, October, 2002).



Plate 9.14 Jenny Kyeyune Namuwonge, *Portrait*, oil and bark-cloth on canvas (1998)
Approx. 95cm x 120cm. Makerere Art Gallery, Photo by the author

Namuwonge applies bark-cloth in strategic areas of her composition in order to bring out more clearly the basic facial features. In this particular work, bark-cloth is used purely as a medium of expression, which she applies on canvas using adhesive materials.

Yet if we consider *On the Move* (plate 9.15), another composition that clearly expresses Namuwonge’s strong determination to review her former attitudes about bark-cloth, she takes on a different approach in terms of image construction as well as use of bark-cloth. Whereas the *Portrait* is painted in dull browns complimented with shredded

bark-cloth, *On the Move* represents a jovial female character taking giant strides towards “the right”, which to the current researcher can be interpreted as a new artistic direction or a new line of thinking or it can even refer to a gender consciousness in the application and usage of bark-cloth.



Plate 9.15 Jenny Kyeyune Namuwonge, *On the Move*, oil and bark-cloth on canvas (1998)
Approx. 48cm x 80cm. Makerere Art Gallery, Photo by the author

Bark-cloth here acts as the canvas on which Namuwonge expresses her freedom and her determination to continue the creative search for the meaning of bark-cloth in the culture of the Baganda, and also to explore its possibilities in modern art. The bright hues in reds, yellows and greens, and the lineal statements in the main figure and in the background fill the composition with vigour and vitality.

Having come to terms with her conscious as far as bark-cloth is concerned, Namuwonge then proceeded to explore her surroundings. Some of her paintings represent life in the rural Buganda where she grew up, while others depict the social and environmental degradation in the outskirts of Kampala, Uganda's capital, which is also located in Buganda. Namuwonge's use of bark-cloth in order to make visual statements about the present social situation in Buganda emphasizes the ongoing transformation of the symbolic importance of bark-cloth. *The Family* (plate 9.16) depicts the poverty affecting most families in the rural areas.



Plate 9.16 Jenny Kyeyune Namuwonge, *Family*, oil and bark-cloth on canvas (1998)
Approx. 60cm x 100cm. Makerere Art Gallery, Photo by the author

In this artwork, Namuwonge uses the medium of bark-cloth to create a window through which the viewer can see the deeper meaning of life in the village. As she explained to me the logic behind the use of bark-cloth in this particular artwork, Namuwonge pointed out: “I wanted to depict the life experience in the village. Some people out there [meaning in the rural areas] are still using the *lubugo* for beddings and for other reasons. You see bark-cloth well represents that kind of life” (interview, October 2002). In fact, Keefa Ssempangi, another artist from Buganda has supported Namuwonge’s critical observation. Ssempangi argued that, “if you want to portray the way our people [meaning the Baganda] are brought up, then inevitably you have to use bark-cloth” (interview, October, 2002). I am not suggesting by any means that bark-cloth has never been a means of communication in the past. The point I am making here is that she uses it in a new form in order to present a visual narrative about the changing culture of the Baganda.

Presenting a different visual approach towards bark-cloth is Kizito-Maria Kasule, who also originates in Buddu County. Kasule, just as Kabiito, grew up in a rural environment where bark-cloth production was an important activity. In fact, his father and several members of his immediate family were directly involved in bark-cloth production and trade. At the undergraduate level at Makerere art school between 1989 and 1993, Kasule was a student of Ssengendo and Nnaggenda in painting and sculpture respectively, and was influenced in several ways by their ideological approaches. In 1992, he undertook research on the aesthetics of Ganda artefacts in selected shrines, for his undergraduate dissertation, a period during which he became more exposed to the diverse cultural artefacts of the Baganda, which also re-awakened his interest in bark-cloth. Kasule is a versatile artist and has found interest in representing various aspects of

his cultural environment. The visit by Ronald Mutebi II (before his coronation) to Makerere University in 1990 was an inspiration for Kasule to begin using bark-cloth in his art practice. As he explained to me:

Although the monarchy had not yet been restored, we [meaning the Baganda students at Makerere University] were very excited about Mutebi's return because we used to hear about the great monarchy of Buganda, but we had never had a chance to see a Kabaka. You know that Kabaka Muteesa II was deposed when we were not yet born. He died in exile and we were told that the heir to the throne was in exile in the UK. Hence, it was an exciting moment to get to meet him at last. Through 'Nkoba za Mbogo' our association of the Baganda students at Makerere University, we organized a bazaar in order to generate the required funds in preparation for his visit. Myself and other fine art students made a few craft objects out of bark-cloth and other local materials for sale, and on his visit, we designed a banner out of bark-cloth, which was placed at the main gate to welcome the *Ssaabataka*, as he was called at that time (interview, September, 2002).

However, Kasule made his major artworks out of bark-cloth four years after the coronation of Kabaka Mutebi II. It so happened that in 1997 he travelled (together with five other artists to Belgium) to participate in an international art exhibition that was due to open in Brussels. Kasule happened to take a piece of bark-cloth with him on that visit although as he states, he had not decided exactly what he wanted to do with that bark-cloth. But while in Brussels, he became unwell and stayed in the hotel while his colleagues went out to prepare for the exhibition. Because he became bored of watching television, Kasule instinctively decided to make a few paintings out of the bark-cloth he had carried along. He thus went to a nearby craft shop and bought some Windsor & Newton oil colour and made his debut paintings on the medium of bark-cloth, of which (plate 9.17) is an example.



Plate 9.17 Kizito-Maria Kasule, *Reflection*, oil on bark-cloth (1997)
Approx. 60cm x 90cm. Creations Art Gallery, Kampala, Photo by the author

Kasule's medical condition and lonely experience at the Bedford Hotel in Brussels, of which *Reflection* is an outcome, cannot be ignored as a contributing factor, in fact, the main inspiration for his exploration of the aesthetic potential of bark-cloth. It is fascinating to note that Kasule had to first travel away from his cultural environment (as this was his maiden visit out of Africa) before he was able to engage more seriously with the medium of bark-cloth in his professional art practice. Kasule's skilful manipulation of bark-cloth in art-making, profits from the professional experience he has acquired both in

painting and sculpture, as is well evident in *Reflection*. At the time of his visit, he was enrolled on a Masters Degree Programme in Sculpture at Makerere art school, and the central focus of his research was on the relevance of colour in sculpture, a line of enquiry that seems to permeate Kasule's creative endeavours when it comes to bark-cloth.¹³

Since his visit to Brussels, Kasule has made further explorations on bark-cloth. In recent years he has changed his approach to painting on bark-cloth; unlike in *Reflection* where he covered almost the entire fabric with image and colour, in the *Bambejja* (plate 9.18), and *Beauties* (plate 9.19) Kasule makes use of bark-cloth as the dominant medium but capitalizes on the principle of contrast in order to bring out his subject.



Plate 9.18 Kizito-Maria Kasule, *Abambejja*, oil on bark-cloth (2002)
120cm x 75cm. Artist's studio, Makerere University, Photo by the author

¹³ At the time of my field research, Kasule had just completed a PhD in Art History



Plate 9.19 Kizito-Maria Kasule, *Beauties*, oil on bark-cloth (2002)
120cm x 75cm. Artist's studio, Makerere University, Photo by the author

When asked what inspires him to paint on bark-cloth, Kasule mentioned that he regards it as paramount for artists to try and give bark-cloth a new cultural meaning. However, Kasule also acknowledged that apart from the cultural and aesthetic curiosity, the economic dynamics also play a significant role in the creative ambitions of many artists in Uganda, and in this case, their decision to engage the medium of bark-cloth in art-production. Kasule contended: "Given the economic difficulties in Africa, an artist in Uganda cannot afford to produce art for art's sake; he/she produces artworks with the intention of making them available for sale to the art collectors" (interview, 2002). Kasule's openness about the economic dimensions of art resonates with Pierre Bourdieu's critical theory of cultural production. Bourdieu has informed us that the development of the system of cultural production is accompanied by a process of differentiation generated by the diversity of the publics at which the different categories

of producers aim their products. “Symbolic goods”, as he contends, “are a two-faced reality, a commodity and a symbolic object. [Although] [t]heir specifically cultural value and their commercial value remain relatively independent... the economic sanction may come to reinforce their cultural consecration” (1993: 113).

In addition to Ssengendo, Kabiito, Namuwonge and Kasule, there are several other artists whose work on bark-cloth has a lot to contribute to our present discussion. For example, Eriya Nsubuga has successfully established a unique style of painting on bark-cloth. His approach is more abstract compared to that of the other artists just discussed. Nsubuga is a graduate of Makerere art school in painting and sculpture, and he is also a Muganda. He completed his B. A. (Fine Art) in 2001 and he is currently undertaking postgraduate studies in sculpture yet he has continued to paint, and to participate in national and international exhibitions. His paintings on bark-cloth have attracted significant attention among the patrons of the arts in Uganda. He draws inspiration from a range of subjects from within and outside the culture of the Baganda, which he represents in a simplistic, yet highly sophisticated style. He is expressionistic in character and does not usually give his artworks titles, which leaves the viewers plenty of space to interpret his artworks from their own perspective. He combines a vocabulary of biomorphic forms with geometrical representations in a rather spontaneous manner. Nsubuga employs bark-cloth mainly as a canvas. He covers the bark-fabric almost entirely in colour unlike Ssengendo, Kabiito, Kasule and Namuwonge, who make use of its natural tonal gradations as part of their composition, thereby qualifying it as a medium of expression. Plates 9.20, 9.21 and 9.22 illustrate Nsubuga’s style of work that fits this description.

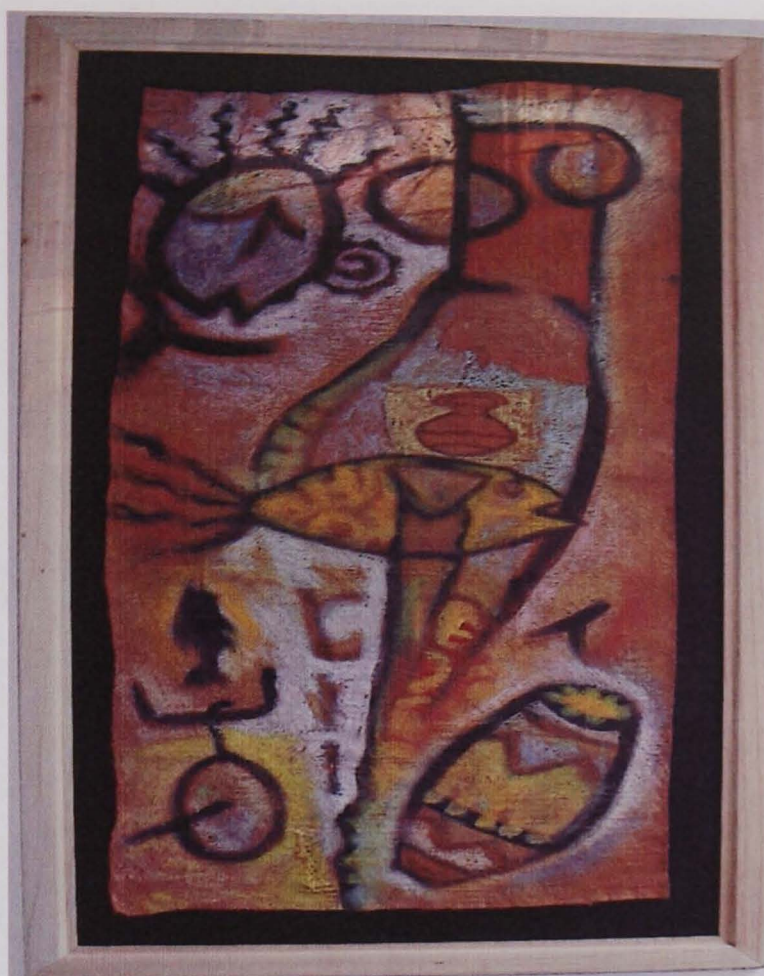


Plate 9.20 Eriya Nsubuga, Untitled I, oil on bark-cloth (2002).
Approx. 42cm x 80cm. Tulifanya Gallery, Kampala, Photo by the author

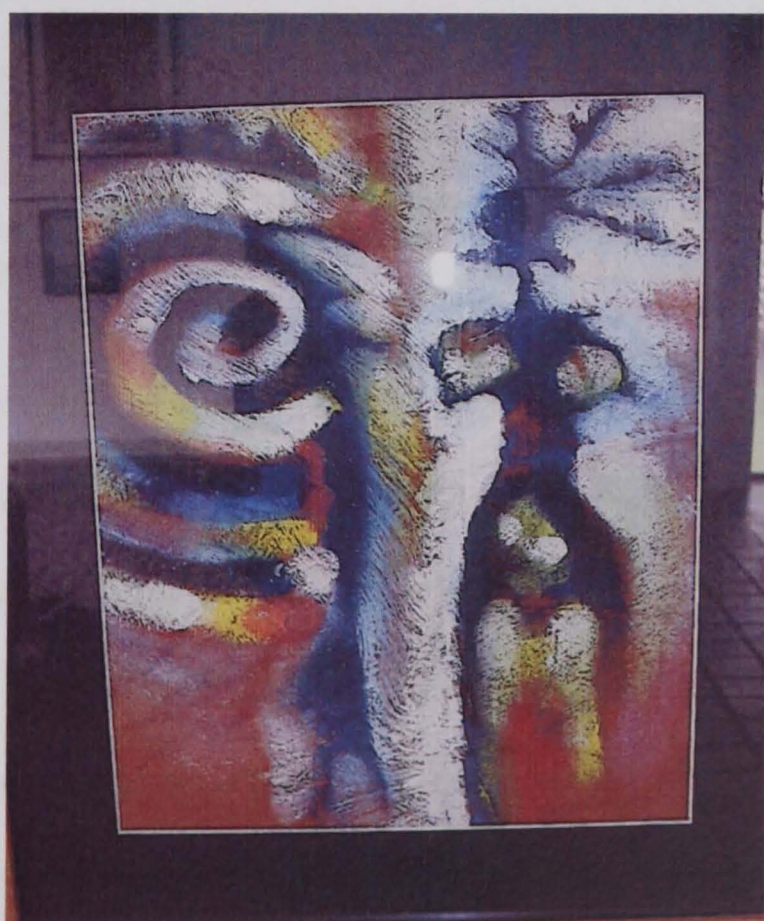


Plate 9.21 Eriya Nsubuga, Untitled II, oil on bark-cloth (2002).
Approx. 30cm x 42cm. Tulifanya Gallery, Kampala, Photo by the author



Plate 9.22 Eriya Nsubuga, *Untitled III*, oil on bark-cloth (2002).
Approx. 40cm x 56cm. Tulifanya Gallery, Photo by the author

Since the coronation of Kabaka Muwenda Mutebi II, the tourist and the expatriate community in Uganda gained momentum in the appreciation of bark-cloth, and have consequently emerged as a distinctive category of consumers and patrons of artworks made out bark-cloth. Several foreigners are willing to pay even more for “fine” artworks, which has given local artists an impetus to explore further the aesthetic possibilities of bark-cloth. It was observed that many people in Buganda, including the elites, are not yet attuned to this new line of approach because of their inability to decode the highly

“sophisticated” visual language in which many of these artworks are presented. This inability by the local population to process and decode the meaning embedded in the visual-cultural products made out of bark-cloth has consequently put Westerners in a “superior” position to influence new directions in the exploration of bark-cloth in the past decade as more examples in next section will show.

9.5.2 Using a Multi-disciplinary Approach in the Mediation of Bark-cloth

Ivan Yakuze is another artist who has contributed in a unique style to the transformation of bark-cloth. His art educational background in sculpture and textiles has un-mistakably made an impact on his aesthetic sensibilities, which he continues to invest in his current practice. Originating from Buddu County, Yakuze joined Makerere Art School in 1997 for his undergraduate studies. He graduated in 2001 with a B.A. (Fine Art), and majored in sculpture and textiles. Yakuze is highly innovative and quite versatile especially when it comes to selection of materials. He has explored the repertoire of bark-cloth typologies in Buganda, and has brought them into concert with other materials drawn from the disciplines of sculpture and textiles, in order to formulate an eclectic visual orchestra. Unlike other artists, Yakuze employs *appliqué* as his principle technique and capitalizes on the textural qualities of the various materials from his surroundings, which he employs in tandem with bark-cloth to create individualized artworks. These include among others: scrap metal, copper and steel wire (commonly applied in sculpture), as well as cowries, buttons, buckles, jute cloth and raffia which are textile/fashion related.

Simple figurative compositions enhanced with basic patterns and geometrical shapes, skilfully organized to create a harmonious interplay of contrasting hues, textures and materials, characterize Yakuze's style of work. Unlike Lwasampijja, Ssengendo, Kabiito, Kasule, Namuwonge and Nsubuga, Yakuze engages all the three distinctive typologies of bark-cloth produced in Buganda namely, in varying tones from the darkest to lightest: 1) *kimote* (soft steamed bark-cloth); 2) *ekikunta* (un-steamed and usually rough bark-cloth); and 3) *kirundu* (a beige-colored very rough bark-cloth extracted from the false muvule-tree, *antiaris toxicaria*). In his explanation, Yakuze states that he finds bark-cloth highly fascinating as an art material and he tries to stretch its possibilities to the limit (interview, January, 2004).

For example in *Daily Duties* (plate 9.23), Yakuze cuts basic shapes out of *kimote* and *ekikunta* bark-cloths, which he juxtaposes in varying tones onto a contrasting background of the lightly colored *kirundu* bark-cloth typology, complemented with jute cloth, and over which he stitches copper and steel wire forged in circles, spirals and zigzag patterns, and polished scrap metal to enhance his composition.



Plate 9.23 Ivan Yakuze, *Daily Duties*, mixed media appliqué (2002).
28cm x 40cm. Artist's studio, Nnaakulabye, Photo by the author

On a few occasions, Yakuze paints human figures in silhouette onto the *kirundu* bark fabric (plate 9.23), but most of his compositions are dominated by stick-like figures forged out of metal contrasted with bark-cloth patches cut in the form of a human torso (plates 9.24, 9.25 and 9.26). Though in a stylized yet abstract visual language, Yakuze's artworks devolve around past and present traditions and cultural values of the Baganda. He makes the family a central feature in his compositions.



Plate 9.24 Ivan Yakuze, *Husband and Wife* forged metal on bark-cloth appliqué (2001).
Approx. 35cm x 50cm. Artist's studio, Nnaakulabye, Photo by the author



Plate 9.25 Ivan Yakuze, *The Couple*, bark-cloth appliqué (2002).
Approx. 22cm x 30cm. Artist's studio, Nnaakulabye, Photo by the author

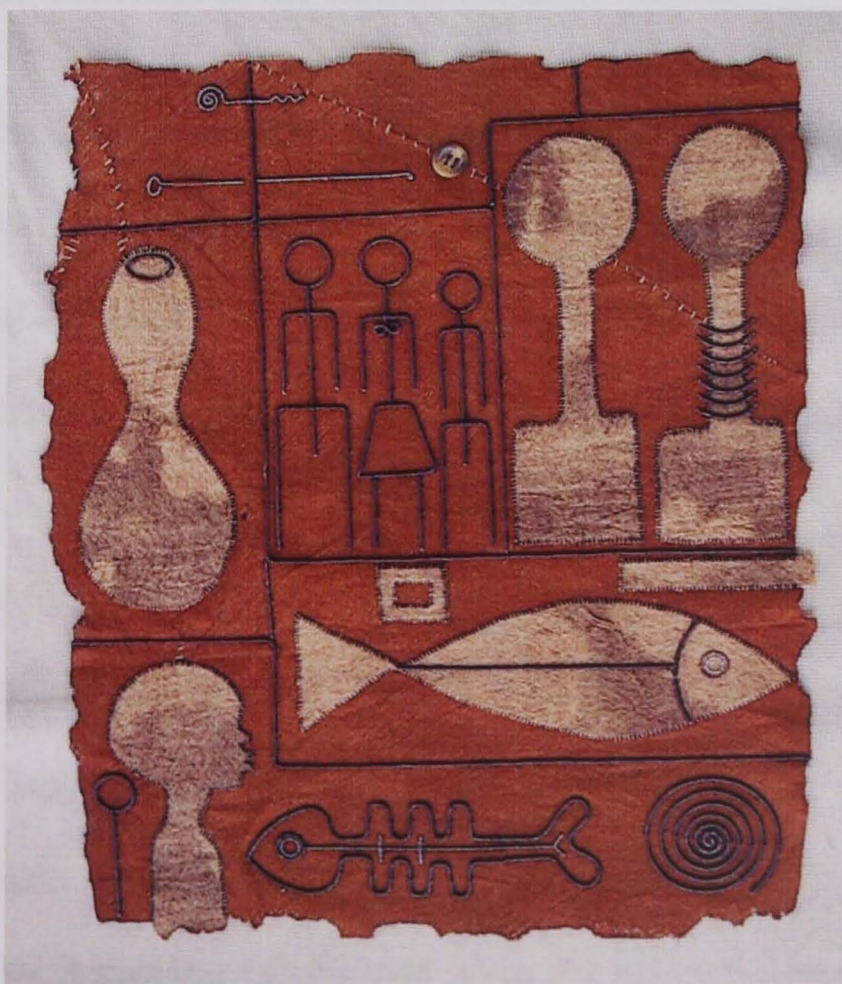


Plate 9.26 Ivan Yakuze, *The Family*, forged metal on bark-cloth appliqué (2001).
Approx. 22cm x 30cm. Artist's studio, Nnaakulabye, Photo by the author

As with the case of Nsubuga, Yakuze's artworks in the medium of bark-cloth (framed and sometimes preserved under glass) have found a ready outlet to the international community through the national galleries, and through independent contacts established between the artist and members of the diplomatic corps in Uganda. He is very aware of the aesthetic sensibilities of his patrons, most of whom, are of Western origin. Whereas his style of work draws a lot from the principles of textile design, Yakuze avoids reproduction techniques and strives to pay individual attention to each of the artworks. As he states, "I take my time to select the materials, and I painstakingly cut and forge the wire, hand stitch the bark-cloth and add all the other materials. This gives me personal satisfaction because each artwork stands out on its own merit, which also makes my clients spend more money on my art pieces" (Yakuze, interview, 2004).

9.5.2.1 Challenging Practices of the Roman Catholic Church?

On the other hand, Rose Kirumira Nnamubiru has made use of bark-cloth in a very unusual context. Since the beginning of this thesis, I have stressed the critical views of the church about the use of bark-cloth. However, Nnamubiru has challenged this view by using the medium of bark-cloth, when she, together with two other artists (Bruno Sserunkuuma and Peter Isuge) were called upon, in 1998, by Rev. Fr. Valdrama to make religious artworks for the Don Bosco Catholic Chapel of Kamuli Technical School in Busoga. For her part, Nnamubiru undertook the designing of the liturgical furniture while Sserunkuuma and Isuge made the way of the cross, and the sculpture of the Virgin Mary, respectively, but what is striking about the Kamuli Chapel is the way these artists have re-interpreted the local material culture, and given it a new meaning that tends to bridge

the gap between indigenous traditions and Christian liturgy. Since the current discussion is about the transformation of the functions and meaning of bark-cloth, I will only deal with Nnamubiru, who directly participates in, and responds to this transformation process. Nnamubiru is an instructor in the Department of Sculpture and Art History. Her style of work is characterized by usage of local materials often, in quite surprising ways that reflect Nnaggenda's impact on her earlier education in sculpture both at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. She was a student at Makerere Art School between 1984 and 1990. On this occasion, I analyse her radical introduction of bark-cloth within the church context.

Using the screen-printing technique, Nnamubiru inscribed a portrait of Jesus on the *kimote* bark-cloth, which she mounted and framed on a block of timber to form a three-dimensional *Crucifix* (plate 9.27) for Kamuli Chapel. The *Crucifix* not only serves as a social commentary about the concept of Christianity and the changing views of the Roman Catholic Church about indigenous practices, but it also highlights the response of the indigenous community towards world views relating to the concept of Christianity. On no account (within the limits of my investigation) did the religious community in Buganda nor the Roman Catholic Church in Uganda in general, encourage or promote the use of bark-cloth within the church space even after the Africanization of liturgy was decreed beginning in the early 1960s. Therefore, in this respect, Nnamubiru's *Crucifix* was ground breaking.



Plate 9.27 Rose Kirumira Nnamubiru, *Crucifix*, printed bark-cloth stretched on wood (1998). Approx. 120cm x 180cm. Don Bosco Chapel, Kamuli, courtesy of Rose Kirumira Nnamubiru

During my discussion with her, Nnamubiru clarified that she found no problem in the use of bark-cloth in the church domain, as the church has since the 1960s adopted other indigenous artefacts like the drums and baskets that were originally prohibited by the Catholic Church. “If things have changed in other aspects of the church” as she argues, “I could not see why the Church should not accept a crucifix designed out of bark-cloth, and thank goodness, Fr. Valdrama did not object to my proposition” (interview, January, 2004). Nnamubiru’s liberalism in the usage of bark-cloth in the church domain therefore enables us to articulate the shift in its meaning, at least to some Christians, who have come to appreciate and disentangle culture from the complex web of religion.

9.5.3 “Outsiders” Quest for the Aesthetic of Bark-cloth?

Apart from the local artists, a few non-Ugandans have also made use of bark-cloth in their visual artistic productions; most significantly, is Rivka Krispin Uziel, an Israeli artist originally from Bulgaria, who has been living in Uganda since the 1990s. Uziel trained as an art teacher at the Tel-Aviv School of Art during the late 1960s, and her area of specialty was in painting and mixed-media representation. She came to Africa during the late 1980s and spent a year in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where she came across bark-cloth artefacts but it was not until she moved to Uganda in 1990 that she started making art out of bark-cloth. Uziel’s association with Makerere art school beginning in the mid-1990s was a contributing factor to her artistic activities involving the medium of bark-cloth because this is a period when serious visual enquiry in the use of local materials was at its peak.

In 1996, she volunteered to teach a few occasional classes in mixed media at Makerere and henceforth, joined the dynamic team of Makerere artists, who were at the time deeply engaged in the use of local materials and artefacts in their visual-cultural productions. A year later, she offered to curate the ‘Different But One’ art exhibition for Makerere staff, which gave her an opportunity to examine more closely the trends of artistic development at Makerere art school. ‘Different But One’ has become an annual event, now in its eighth year, and Uziel has continued to act as the curator. What is interesting is the way bark-cloth has been appropriated as a backdrop or complementary fabric during the exhibition series. By integrating cultural artefacts like bark-cloth that exemplify traditions of the past, together with modern art practices, brings to light the notion of continuity and change, the locus of our discussion. On a few occasions (for

example in 2002), promotional materials for the exhibition (catalogue and posters) have been designed based on the concept of bark-cloth. Plate 9.28 illustrates how Makerere artists have redefined the concept of bark-cloth through design and reprographic methods in the catalogues and posters. As I argue, through art education, bark-cloth has been fetishized and elevated to a fine art status because of its aesthetic qualities and its cultural significance especially in Buganda.

In chapter three, we observed that bark-cloth was and is still used as a backdrop in the mausoleums and that it serves to conceal the tombs of the departed kings for cultural purposes, and to protect them from the public gaze. It was also pointed out that bark-cloth serves in the royal domain and among the ordinary people to preserve important cultural artefacts yet, its use in the gallery context has nothing to do with any of these functions.

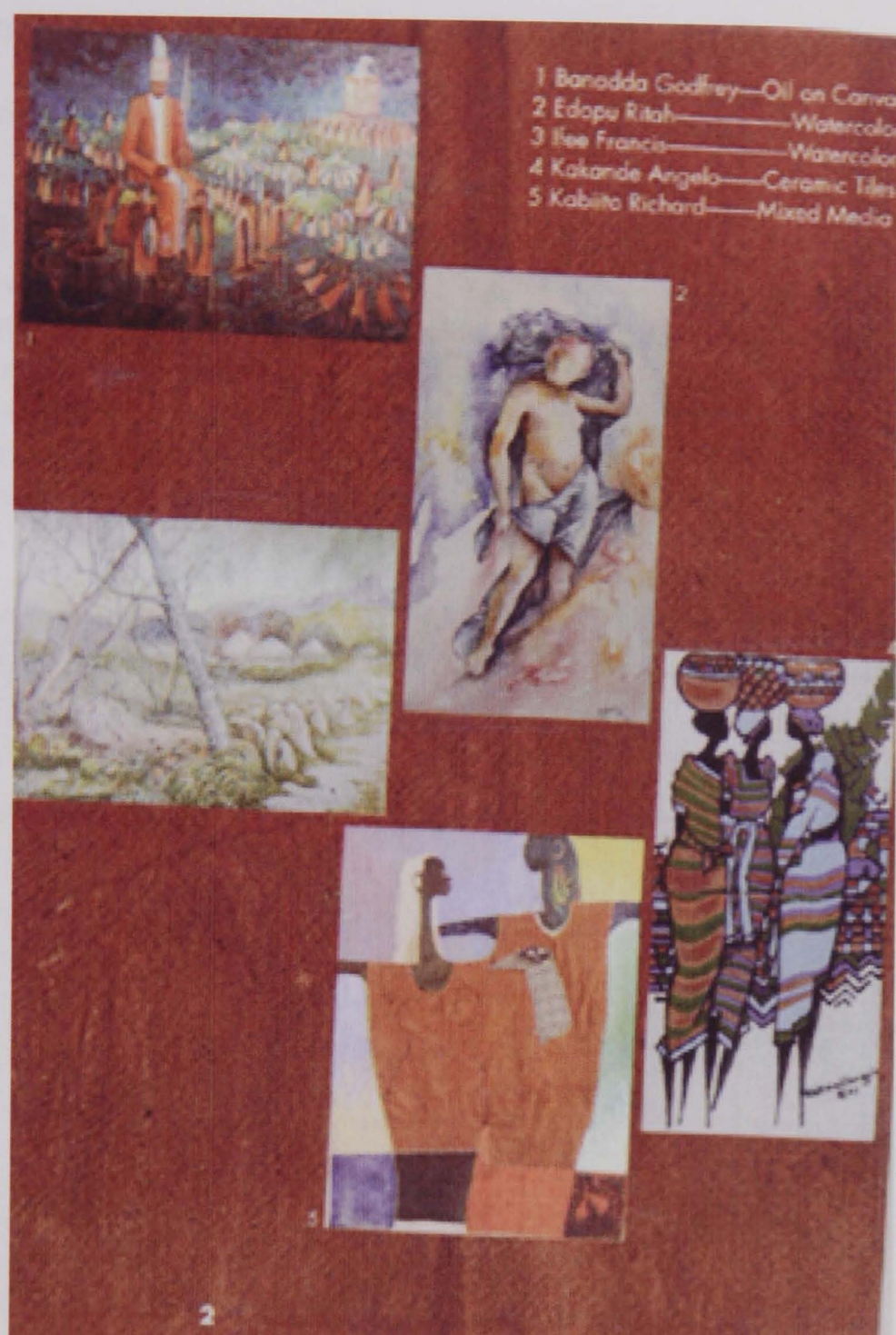


Plate 9.28 Page extracted from 'Different But One 2002' Exhibition Catalogue

As regards Uziel's own artistic productions, she tears, folds and drapes bark-cloth into ornithological and zoomorphic images that constitute the main subject for her two-dimensional artworks. She manipulates her subjects with strong contrasting hues achieved using acrylic paints and bark-cloth as can be observed in (plates 9.29 and 9.30). During our discussion on her artistic relationship with the bark-cloth, Uziel made it clear

that she is attracted to bark-cloth because of its aesthetic merits rather than its cultural significance in Buganda. She states:

I am not particularly concerned with its cultural meaning. For me, bark-cloth is a medium of expression. Because I am a very adventurous artist, I welcome any medium that gives me an opportunity to explore to the limit my creative abilities, which I found to be the case with bark-cloth, especially when you tear it; it presents a lot of possibilities in terms of texture, colour and subject matter. With bark-cloth, I am always open to the adventure of seeing the results (Uziel, interview, January, 2003).



Plate 9.29 Rivka Uziel, *Stylized Bird*, acrylics on shredded bark-cloth (2000)
Approx. 60cm x 80cm. Artist's collection, courtesy of Rivka Uziel



Plate 9.30 Rivka Uziel, *Birds in the Nest*, acrylics on bark-cloth (2000)
Approx. 60cm x 80cm. Artist's collection, courtesy of Rivka Uziel

What is important to note here is that Uziel's "outsider" position enables her to explore bark-cloth in a more radical style for two reasons; 1) since she does not have any cultural ties to the fabric, Uziel does not ponder on the meaning of bark-cloth as would most of the local artists; and 2) Uziel is not very concerned with the eventual outcome of her creative adventures because her engagement with bark-cloth is out of sheer pleasure and is therefore neither academically nor economically driven.

9.5.4 Bark-cloth, Art and Tourism in Uganda

The tourism industry, which had began to take root in Uganda at the time of independence, somewhat redefined the cultural value of bark-cloth. Bark-cloth, a cultural artefact closely associated with the Baganda, came to be represented as a symbol of Uganda because of the dual position which Kabaka Muteesa II occupied, as the head of state, and also the head of the Buganda cultural institution. Further, because under the revised agreement of 1955 Buganda had been given the responsibility to oversee the administration of education at primary and secondary level, there was a change in the curriculum and issues of national interest were for the first time brought on board. In relation to art and craft, students were encouraged to use local materials, and bark-cloth began to feature (though on a limited scale) as a medium of expression. As the tourist industry in Uganda began to take shape in the 1960s, bark-cloth and bark-cloth products soon became a dominant tourist commodity because of its association with the Kabakaship, a historically powerful cultural institution, whose head the Kabaka was also President of the newly formed Republic of Uganda. Bark-cloth thus came to be regarded not only as a fabric of the Baganda but also as a national cultural symbol.

Let me now focus on two painters whose artistic productions on bark-cloth have been overtly informed by the array of possibilities offered by the tourist industry. Though remotely connected to the Makerere art school bark-cloth movement, Joseph Lwanyaga Musoke's and George Senteza's close connections with Kasubi Royal Tombs, a mausoleum of the past four Buganda Kings, a cultural site, and tourist attraction, has made them explore the subject of bark-cloth from a distinctively different perspective. Musoke is a graduate of Makerere art school and a student of Todd in the 1960s. After

completion of his undergraduate studies in 1968, Musoke joined the Royal College of Art in London for a Masters in Ceramics, which he was not able to complete for health reasons. He returned to Makerere University in 1970 and pursued a Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE), which led him into the teaching profession. However, due to the political and economic disturbances that happened in the 1970s, Musoke fled Uganda. He lived in Kenya for a few years, where he worked at the East African Ceramic Industries but later moved on to Tanzania. He taught ceramics and art appreciation at the University of Dar-es-Salaam. He returned to Uganda after the end of the civil war and has since been working at Kasubi Royal Tombs as a tourist guide and artist in residence. As I discuss in the next few paragraphs, I contend that his proximity to the tourist population has influenced his artistic style and choice of subject matter.

Because of his art training, Musoke is well equipped with the necessary visual tools to enable him communicate fluently to his audience. He has a good command of both animal and human figure drawing, which constitute the main subject of his compositions. However, Musoke normally opts to present his ideas in a simplified way in a way almost akin to batik art, a popular visual practice in Uganda since the 1970s.¹⁴ His artworks (predominantly group compositions) in the medium of powder paint bound in natural gums on bark-cloth represent some of the rural sceneries and social activities in Uganda ranging from household quotidian tasks like preparing food, gathering firewood, grazing cattle, to beer parties and market scenes that appeal to the tourist community as plates 9.31 and 9.32 illustrate.

¹⁴ For details on the history of batik in Uganda, see Kyeyune (2003).



Plate 9.31 Joseph Lwanyaga Musoke, *The Market Scene*, powder paint on bark-cloth (2002). 40cm x 60cm. Tourist shop, Kasubi Royal Tombs, Photo by the author



Plate 9.32 Joseph Lwanyaga Musoke, *Grazing in the Sunset*, powder paint on bark-cloth (2002) 60cm x 40cm. Tourist shop, Kasubi Royal Tombs, Photo by the author

Kim Yong-Woon has noted that “advancing means of communication and the transmission of information create increasing opportunities for one people to be cognizant of others while at the same time raising an awareness of their mutual differences, thus making a people conscious of their own identity” (1997: 56). Yet Jules-Rosette Benetta, a theorist on tourist art states that tourist art symbolically combines the cultural and aesthetic goals of its producers and the expectations of its consumers (1984: xi). Whereas Musoke employs bark-cloth of the Baganda in his visual artistic endeavours, his compositions are not limited to the culture of the Baganda. He draws inspiration from a range of traditions¹⁵ thus giving tourists a range of cultural products to carry back home as mementos of their sojourn in Uganda. Benetta further explains that “tourist art objects are valued not for customary or ritual purposes but, instead, because of their importance as markers and mementos of the tourist’s journey” (ibid: 3).

However, in other cases Musoke takes leave of pursuing tourist interests and instead, makes use of the medium of bark-cloth in order to address some of the social issues that tend to infringe on the indigenous traditions, norms and values. *Ekimansulo* (strip tease) (plate 9.33) is one example where Musoke makes a visual commentary on the impact of *Westernisation* on the local norms and values in the twenty-first century. Culturally, it was a taboo for a Muganda to expose sensual parts of his/her body before the public. However, at the dawn of the twenty-first century, a new culture is taking root in Kampala Uganda’s capital and its suburbs (situated in Buganda), which has aroused public concern. As Musoke asserted, “the concept of *ekimansulo* is a potential threat to the norms and values of the Baganda, and therefore must be addressed with immediate

¹⁵ For example *Grazing in the Sunset* (plate 9.32) represents the cultural activities of the people of Western and Northern Uganda where pastoral farming is a tradition.

effect; as an artist, I use my brush in order to visually express this issue of public concern, which is spreading at an alarming rate in Buganda” (interview, October, 2002).



Plate 9.33 Joseph Lwanyaga Musoke, *Ekimansulo (Strip Tease)*, acrylics on bark-cloth (2002)
Approx. 45cm x 40cm. Tourist shop, Kasubi Royal Tombs, Photo by the author

In this particular case, Musoke uses bark-cloth metaphorically to express the notion of “death” and moral decay in some quarters of society in Buganda.

Following in Musoke’s artistic footsteps is George Senteza, a high school student at Mengo Senior Secondary School (at the time of my visit to Kasubi in 2002), and part-time tourist guide at Kasubi Royal Tombs. His distant connection with Makerere art school is through Musoke’s influence, and through his art teacher Dora Kiggundu, a former student of Makerere art school. Senteza is also a grandson of Katarina Kikome,

heir to one of Kabaka Muteesa I's wives. As is the case with Musoke, Senteza's close association with the tourist industry heavily influences his creative expressions. He capitalizes on subjects depicting the rural environment (plate 9.34) and African wild life (plate 9.35), but he presents them in what Dean MacCannell (1999) has referred to as *staged authenticity*. According to MacCannell's theory of *staged authenticity*, which is informed by Erving Goffman's analysis of the structural division of social establishments¹⁶, "Sightseers are motivated by a desire to see life as it is really lived, and the general understanding held out before tourists as an ideal "is an *authentic* and *demystified* experience of an aspect of some society or other person" ...[but] "what is taken to be real might, in fact, be a show that is based on the structure of reality" (1999: 94, 95). In the *Homestead* (plate 9.34), Senteza employs bark-cloth as a locus on which he presents an ideal rural homestead where adults, children, domestic animals and birds all share a common visual space and express a fictionalized narrative about rural cultural experiences. Both *Homestead* (plate 9.34), and *Wildlife* (plate 9.35) serve as a reminder of the places visited by the tourists.

¹⁶ Goffman has analysed social space into two regions namely: *front* and *back*, whereby "the front is the meeting place of hosts and guests or customers and service persons, and the back is the place where members of the home team retire between performances to relax or to prepare [for the guests] (as cited in MacCannell 1999: 92).

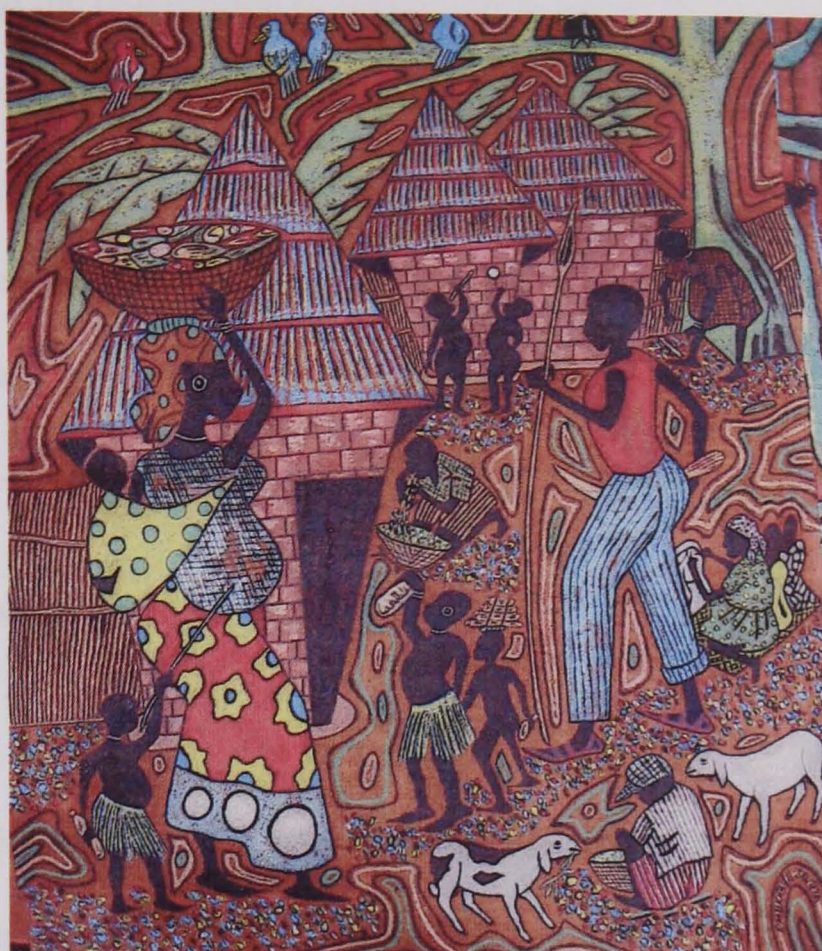


Plate 9.34 George Senteza, *Homestead*, powder paint on bark-cloth (2002)
Approx. 40cm x 60cm. Tourist shop, Kasubi Royal Tombs, Photo by the author



Plate 9.35 George Senteza, *Wildlife*, powder paint on bark-cloth (2002)
Approx. 40cm x 60cm. Tourist shop, Kasubi Royal Tombs, Photo by the author

It is noteworthy that the redefinition of bark-cloth at Makerere has not only been confined to the discipline of painting with a few cases in sculpture, but other disciplines in the department of industrial arts have embraced the use of bark-cloth. In the next section, I discuss research developments on bark-cloth in the field of applied arts (textiles, fashion and jewellery) since 1995, when exploration of local materials for artistic purposes gained momentum.

9.5.5 Bark-cloth in the Field of Applied Arts

I happened to be among the few artists in the mid-1990s, who were engaged in experimenting with bark-cloth for textile design purposes. I was at the time, undertaking graduate studies in textiles. My initial work was in the technique of appliqué using a combination of textiles and bark-cloth. In order to fully appreciate the factors that influenced my participation in the use of bark-cloth, and in order to analyse the current developments in the field of applied arts, it is important that I recapitulate on the design history at Makerere Art School.

Just to remind us, in 1944, Trowell introduced a parallel course in crafts at Makerere art school having realized the difficulties in integrating material culture within her painting and sculpture curriculum. Then between 1945 and 1958 major changes happened by which Makerere was affiliated with London University through a special relationship organized by the colonial office. We also recall that Makerere art school faced threats of closure, because it had no place in this special relationship since the London University did not have a course purely on Fine art in its Arts programme. Eventually the school was for some time allowed to continue operating, but in a rather

incognito status, which prompted Trowell to revise her teaching philosophy, and the overall objectives of the Art School, in a bid to secure it a recognizable status within the University. By introducing “Craft” courses like textile design, lithography, and graphic design, Trowell convinced the University authorities and Government officials as well as the public that art could make a positive contribution towards social development. However, when she retired in 1958, these “Craft” courses were scrapped from the curriculum because of the difference in the ideologies of the Todd administration that succeeded Trowell’s. We further recall that the economic crisis of the 1970s forced Makerere Art School to review its curriculum in order to align it with the changing needs of society, an ideology that has been maintained to the present.

It thus happened that in the 1980s, Makerere Art School, under the administration of Francis Musango embarked on broadening the educational programme. A revival of some of the “Craft” courses like textile design that had become obsolete was also considered. However, these new plans also called for urgent staff development. Hence, Musango encouraged a few students to return to the Art School (as Graduate Fellows), in order to pursue postgraduate studies, but with the intention of joining the teaching staff upon completion of their studies. Having completed my undergraduate studies in 1989 in painting and graphic design, I returned to Makerere arts school in 1992 to take up a graduate fellowship in textile design under the supervision of Musango, A.P. Yiga and Josephine Mukasa. I graduated with an M. A. (Fine art) in 1995. However, due to the lack of appropriate reproduction facilities, my research project, on the principles and techniques of decorative fabric design was restricted to direct painting, block printing, stencilling, and appliqué. It is, therefore, no coincidence that my earlier works that

incorporate bark-cloth are executed in the technique of appliqué as can be observed in *Coronation* (plate 9.36), a wall hanging inspired by the cultural rejuvenation that began with the restoration of the Buganda monarchy.

9.5.6 Visual Adventures with Bark-cloth in Textile Design

Made in 1995, *Coronation* combines a variety of techniques including direct and resist painting, appliqué and embroidery, and a combination of fabrics including bark-cloth. The artwork depicts the symbolic role of the Kabaka as a “Protector” of his kingdom Buganda. As discussed in chapter three, during the coronation ritual, the Kabaka is handed a spear and shield to signify his position of leadership and responsibility towards protection of his kingdom.



Plate 9.36 Venny Nakazibwe, *Coronation*, direct painting and appliqué (1995)
65cm x 90cm. Artist’s collection, Photo by the author

By the time I completed my postgraduate studies in 1995, further changes were taking place at Makerere Art School. With the new developments in its education programme, the Art School changed its nomenclature from the 'Margaret Trowell School of Art' to the 'Margaret Trowell School of Industrial and Fine Arts', and was reorganized into three fully-fledged departments namely: 1) Painting and Art History; 2) Sculpture and Drawing; and 3) Industrial Arts and Design. The latter was meant to administer courses in the applied arts including: printmaking, graphic design, illustration, textiles, fashion design, jewellery, and photography. But it so happened that in June of the same year, I spent four months at the Fabric Workshop and Museum (FWM) in Philadelphia, USA, as part of my apprenticeship in textile design, and a further four months in 1997. Upon my return to Makerere University, I set up a proper screen-printing facility in the Department of Industrial Arts and Design.

My exposure to industrial methods of fabric production and decoration during my visit to the FWM was thus an influential factor in my approach to design and teaching. My immediate attention was focused on ensuring professional proficiency within the textile programme, which explains why the department of industrial arts, and the textile section (of which I was head), did not initially get much involved in the exploration of the aesthetic possibilities of bark-cloth. However, as the department started hosting international workshops, I became increasingly conscious of the design potentials of bark-cloth and made a few functional products out of this fabric.

For example, during the 'Artists in Development: Product and Textile Design Workshop' organized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) under the sponsorship of the Norwegian Agency for

Development Cooperation (NORAD), and to which I acted as local coordinator. I designed a two-piece suit out of bark-cloth (plate 9.37), which I sported at the closing ceremony. My decision to dress in bark-cloth was both culturally and aesthetically driven. From the cultural perspective, the closing ceremony was going to be a unique opportunity for the display of dress traditions across Africa and beyond as the workshop had drawn participants from eleven African countries, and facilitators from UK, Bangladesh, Columbia, Zimbabwe and South Africa. Having grown up in Buddu County, and having worked since childhood with my mother in a craft industry that involved the use of bark-cloth, as discussed in the previous chapter, I never developed, at any time, a phobia for bark-cloth. Therefore, I considered wearing bark-cloth at such an international gathering, a unique opportunity for me to establish my cultural identity. From the aesthetic perspective, I wanted to explore the applicability of modern fabric design techniques and media on bark-cloth, and to examine the response of the elite community at Makerere University towards new innovations in the use of such local cultural artefacts as bark-cloth, which has been a contentious fabric since the introduction of Christianity and Western education. I used the screen-process technique of fabric decoration complemented by direct painting using transparent and opaque fabric design pigment. Plate 9.38 illustrates further explorations in bark-cloth decoration using this combinational approach. Unlike in the bark-cloth suit where I printed placement images, *My Busuuti*, a fabric length of about three meters, is an example of my design research on bark-cloth, based on the reproduction techniques of fabric design and decoration.



Plate 9.37 (left) Venny Nakazibwe, self- designed bark-cloth suit, screen process and direct painting (1999).
 Plate 9.38 (right) *My Busuuti*, screen-printed bark-cloth yardage (1999), courtesy of Godfrey Banadda

Since 1999, my occasional dressing in bark-cloth during art exhibitions in a way, helped to generate a positive response among the art and design students. It generated a positive response among students because it demystified their fears about public opinion rising from the deep-seated attitudes about bark-cloth as a shroud. By seeing bark-cloth redesigned and applied in modern fashion, and moreover worn by a person of my professional status, at important public events like the 1999 International Workshop, an event unrelated to the cultural rituals of the Baganda, students might possibly be

encouraged to explore the potential of bark-cloth in their respective disciplines. A few such students ought to be highlighted at this stage.

9.5.7 Sarah Nakisanze's Entrepreneurial Approach in the Use of Bark-cloth

Sarah Nakisanze has pushed the design possibilities of bark-cloth to new dimensions. Nakisanze's undergraduate training is in painting and sculpture. After completion of her undergraduate studies in 1994, Nakisanze joined her mother's tailoring workshop, where she acquired the necessary skills which enabled her not only to cross over into the field of fashion design, but which were later to become helpful in her design activities in the medium of bark-cloth.¹⁷ Born in Kyaddondo County, Nakisanze, like several other artists earlier discussed in this chapter, had little exposure to bark-cloth until after completion of her undergraduate education. As she was undertaking a tailoring course at her mother's workshop, Nakisanze also worked on a part-time basis, as a sales assistant in the boutique of Gallery Café, a reputable art gallery in Kampala, then owned by two Canadians, Sylvia Walters and Karen Wilson.¹⁸ There she gained further insight into the field of textiles as the gallery had become famous for marketing resist-painted fabrics from Southern Africa. In addition, working at Gallery Café gave her the opportunity to study the aesthetic preferences of the international community, who are the principle patrons of the arts in Uganda. Before she moved on to bark-cloth, Nakisanze started making and exhibiting tie-dye embroidered wall hangings, which as she explained

¹⁷ Mrs. Jastine Muyingo is a dressmaker operating on Colville Street in Kampala. She also gives instruction in tailoring to a few individuals.

¹⁸ Because of marriage commitments, Sylvia and Karen sold off Gallery Café to Michael Keller, an American dealer, in 2000 but following his death a year later, the Gallery closed down.

to me, did not really catch the attention of the international community, perhaps because they lacked a 'Ugandan' visual ingredient.

Nevertheless, her enterprising character was not going to be deterred from the field of textiles by a few false starts. As it so happened, Nakisanze was among the Ugandan artists that participated in two international textile workshops organized by the Department of Industrial Arts and Design in 1998 and 1999 respectively. Through these workshops, she was introduced to the screen process technique and was inspired to explore more deeply the design potential of bark-cloth although her visual concepts were only concretized in 2000 when she undertook a six-months formal training in fabric decoration and business management organized by the Textile Development Agency (TEXDA), a textile sector within the Uganda integrated programme of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). Upon completion of this programme, Nakisanze joined the Uganda Small-Scale Industries Association (USSIA), and teamed up with a businessperson (name not disclosed), in order to establish a craft business specializing in fine design products made out of bark-cloth. Nakisanze designs and markets a wide range of bark-cloth products including among others: cushion covers, wall hangings, centre pieces, and fashion accessories especially ladies handbags embellished with screen-printed designs enhanced with hand and machine embroidery as illustrated in (plates 9.39, 9.40 and 9.41).

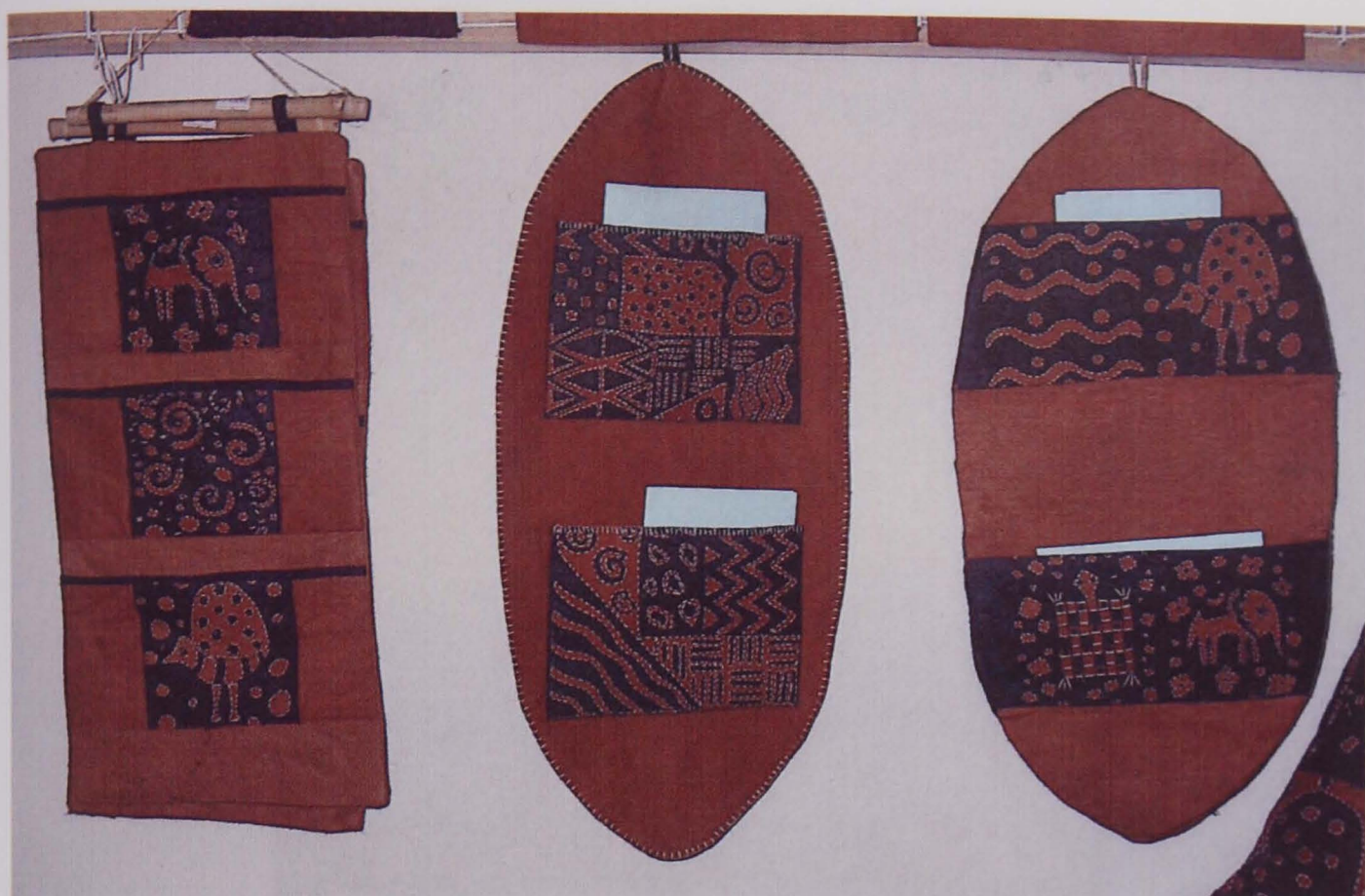


Plate 9.39 Sarah Nakisanze, Message-holders, screen-process and hand embroidery with raffia on bark-cloth (2002)
Each piece, approx. 35cm x 60cm. Africa Exposure 2000 (tourist market) Kampala, Photo by the author



Plate 9.40 Sarah Nakisanze, Set of Cushions, screen-process and hand embroidery with raffia on bark-cloth (2002)
Each piece, 37cm x 37cm. Africa Exposure 2000 (tourist market) Kampala, Photo by the author



Plate 9.41 Sarah Nakisanze, Wall hangings and handbags,
Screen-process and machine embroidery on bark-cloth (2002). Each piece, approx. 35cm x 65cm
Handbags, H x W x D: 21 x 15 x 3cm. Africa Exposure 2000 (tourist market) Kampala, Photo by the author

Nakisanze employs a variety of motifs inspired from local material culture and the associated geometric patterns, as well as African wildlife (animals, birds, fish and reptiles), which are popular subjects in tourist art. However, Nakisanze's bark-cloth craft products are designed to a high level of proficiency compared with most of the bark-cloth products so far available on the market. Her choice of approach is informed by the wealth of information she has acquired over time, through contact with art galleries, about consumer expectations. Unlike several of her counterparts in this cultural industry, Nakisanze carries out market surveys, in order to establish the public's reaction to her products, and because she has direct contact with the consumers, she is able to articulate easily the demands of this market. It should be mentioned here that many crafts persons

in Uganda, as elsewhere around the world, depend on middlemen who serve as art mediators in the craft business. As she explains:

While doing my market research, I realized that the things tourists buy are things that are African, that are Ugandan, so to say; and I knew straight away that marketing design products made out of bark-cloth would be a viable business because it [bark-cloth] is really Ugandan enough...I thought about such themes as wildlife, and cultural motifs although I cross boundaries for my inspiration to include motifs from elsewhere in Africa. You know, this is a cosmopolitan world ... (Nakisanze, interview, October, 2002).

Nakisanze is currently pursuing her postgraduate studies in Makerere Art School, but also working as part-time instructor in fashion design.

9.5.8 Bark-cloth in the Realm of Fashion: Re-inventing the Past?

Since the beginning of this century, there has been growing interest in the use of bark-cloth within the department of industrial arts especially in the field of fashion design and jewellery, which also happen to be among the latest additions to the design curriculum at Makerere art school. It is interesting to note that both students and staff have focused on exploring the aesthetic potential of bark-cloth, cowries, beads and copper wire, all of which were of significant cultural and economic value in Buganda until the mid-nineteenth century. The economic value of bark-cloth needs no further discussion here, as it has already been well articulated in chapter three, four and five of this thesis. I will therefore briefly talk about the cultural and economic value of cowries, beads and copper wire, and how they have been blended with the bark-cloth to recall the past, to articulate the present and to project on the future of Buganda culture.

Historians have speculated that cowries were introduced in Buganda through indirect trade possibly as early as the seventeenth century (Reid 2002: 147). Until the end of the nineteenth century, the cowry shell was not only an important currency in Buganda but it also had cultural significance. Kaggwa states that upon the death of Kabaka Kateregga (ca.1614-1644), his jawbone was preserved in a wooden bowl into which was also placed cowry shells which had holes¹⁹ given him in his lifetime by his chiefs, whenever they went to pay homage to him at his palace. He further explains that even at a later period, whenever kings or chiefs died, their successors were still obliged to take cowry shells whenever they went to visit their mausoleums, and the popularity of those kings or chiefs was determined by the quantity of cowries collected (Kaggwa 1971: 42-43, 57).²⁰ Yet in the economic domain, Richard Reid, an economic historian on pre-colonial Buganda, informs us that “By the 1850s, virtually everything [in Buganda] had at least a nominal cowry value; but, as cloth became more current, by the late nineteenth century, cowries [were] gradually devalued [to such an extent that] a single act of exchange [could] involve the transfer of thousands of shells” (2002: 147). Hence in order to ease the counting, and to settle the transactions more easily, the Baganda would tie 100 cowries on a string, which they referred to as *ekyasa*. I was informed that as they engaged in long-distance trade activities, the Baganda developed a tendency of tying or sewing cowries on their garments as a means of easy transportation of currency and for the safety of their finances (interview, Ssemukasa, June 2002). In other words, bark-cloth served as a material for dress, but also as a repository, or current account for the Baganda traders.

¹⁹ It is likely that the idea of taking to the royal shrines cowries that had holes in them was to render them dysfunctional in monetary terms.

²⁰ This practice of *okukiika embuga* (paying homage to the king (departed or reigning), is still respected in Buganda although the presentation of cowries is now obsolete and has been replaced by modern currency.

The point not to be missed here is that cowries, like bark-cloth, were important cultural symbols not only because of their economic value but also because they were important markers of social hierarchies, and were often used to bridge social relations.

As can be observed in plate 9.42, Sarah Magoba, an undergraduate fashion student, re-interprets the symbolic significance of bark-cloth and the cowry, in her end of final year project. In a mini-fashion show organized within the department of industrial arts and design, Magoba designed an outfit in the medium of bark-cloth enhanced with cowries, based on the theme ‘the changing moral values of women in Buganda’. At the end of the show, I interviewed her and she explained to me that she (just like Musoke) wanted to make a commentary about the effects of globalization on indigenous values. Magoba stated: “I wanted to depict how easy it has become for us [meaning the younger generation] to embrace modern trends of fashion and everything else as compared to our parents and grand-parents. I use bark-cloth and cowries because they represent the culture and traditions of the Baganda” (Magoba, interview, June, 2002).



Plate 9.42 Lucy Magoba, Creative Outfit,
Hand-constructed bark-cloth garment complimented with cowry shells (2002)
Makerere Art School, Photos by the author

Magoba's design concept illustrates that whereas in the past, women in Buganda were restricted to domestic environments and had to cover their bodies from the breast area down to the ankles, the demands inflicted upon them by socio-economic and political shifts have caused them to review their gendered position, and to act otherwise. As Barrie Reynolds and Margaret A. Stott, analysts of material culture have pointed out, "...clothing serves as a communicative device through which social change is contemplated, proposed, enforced and denied" (1987: 109).

9.5.9 Jewellery Concepts in Bark-cloth

The appropriation of bark-cloth and cowries at Makerere has also been observed in the discipline of jewellery as plates 9.43 to 9.45 exemplify. However, in addition to

bark-cloth and cowries, undergraduate students have also incorporated the *obutiiti* (small beads) and *ekikomo* (copper wire) (plates 9.43 9.44) in their design practice.²¹ These, they apply by way of stitching, and using adhesives. Historians inform us that, for several centuries, beads were an important form of currency, and a commodity in Buganda and the East African region. Reid has mentioned that, “Glass beads were common throughout East Africa, and were brought in increasing bulk from Europe, in addition to those earlier brought from India, and in particular from Amsterdam and Venice, from the end of the seventeenth-century onward” (2002: 144), and Roscoe states that *olusinda* (the blue bead) “was considered to be of great value” among the Baganda (1911: 457). Beads of various colours but mainly in white, red and blue, were used together with bark-cloth in the decoration of various royal artefacts particularly the jawbones of the departed kings and until the present, they are still used in the design and decoration of the *nguugu* (crown) of the Kabaka, and in the decoration of the *balongo* artefacts. In ordinary use, *embira* (beads of a bigger size) are used in plaiting children’s hair but mothers also tie them around the waist of their baby girls to enable them develop a well-trimmed waistline. Yet among the adults, beads have a different symbolic connotation. Married women in Buganda (and these days most females even from other regions) wear the *obutiiti* around their waistline to enhance their sexual life, and for beauty. Hence, based on the above contexts in which beads are used in everyday life, their application in tandem with bark-cloth by Makerere art and design students deserves scholarly attention.

Copper wire and plates were important in Buganda as they provided the raw material for making ornaments and spears, which formed part of the royal regalia. Like

²¹ Many of the artworks are still in prototype, and have therefore not yet been developed into commercial products.

cowries and beads, the history of copper in Buganda is not clear although it has been speculated that by the second half of the eighteenth-century, “copper wire was an increasingly common commodity in Buganda, being carried by traders from the coast to the lake region [and perhaps] ... from Katanga region [in the Democratic Republic of Congo], where it had been mined since the fifth-century A.D” (Reid 2002: 79) although no direct contact between the Baganda and the coastal peoples as far back as the fifth-century has been confirmed. A discussion on pre-colonial trade relations between Buganda and the coast has already been presented in chapter four.

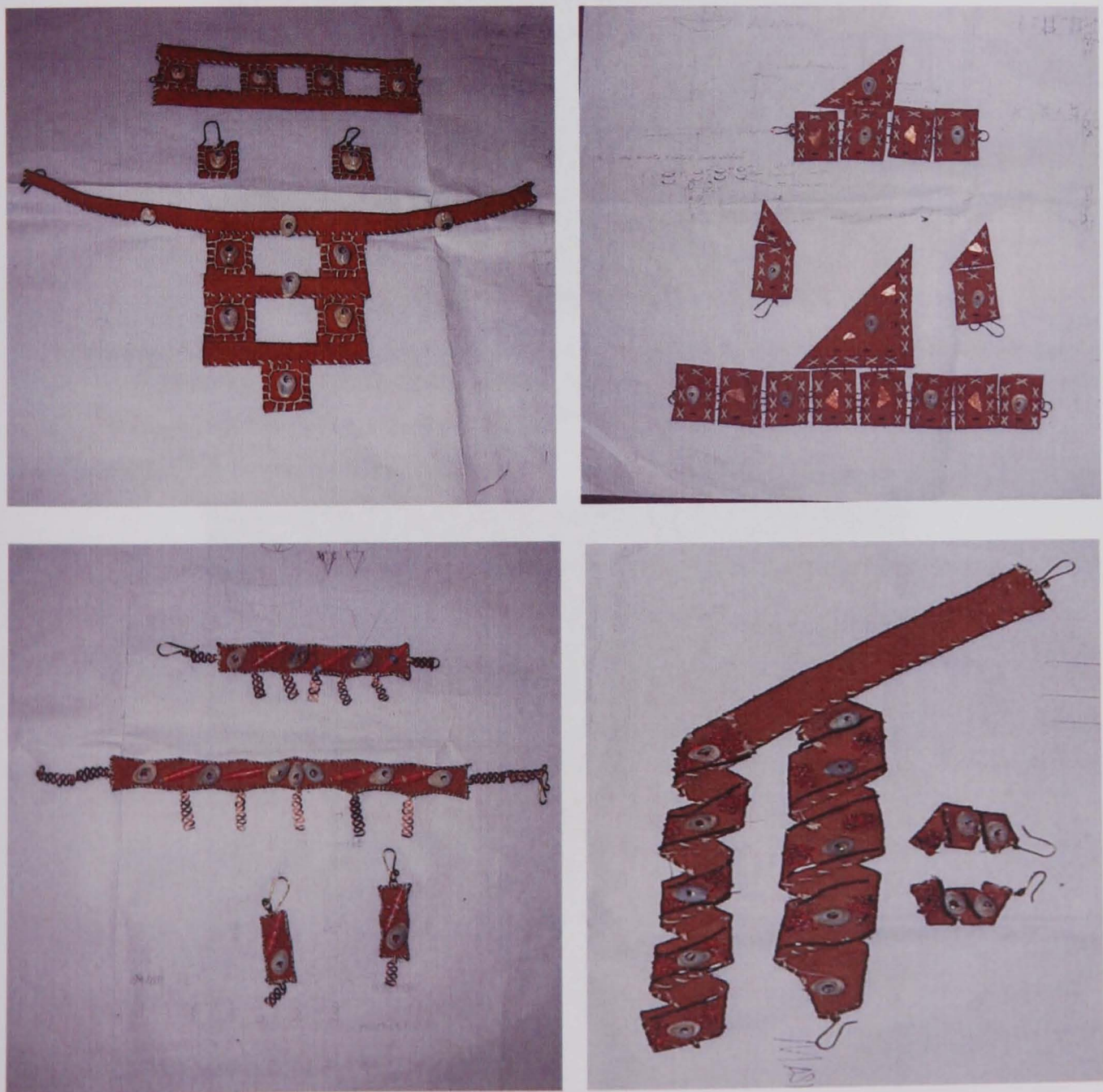


Plate 9.43 Undergraduate examination pieces in jewellery design, Makerere Art School (2002)
Photo by the author



Plate 9.44 Dora Kasozi, instructor in jewellery design modelling an exam piece (2002)
 Note the use of bark-cloth, cowries, raffia embroidery and copper plates
 Photo by the author



Plate 9.45 Bracelet examination piece, rolled bark-cloth and cowries (2002)
 Photo by the author

The above examples, and several other cases thus far discussed articulate the change in the redefinition of bark-cloth in modern times, and enables us to hypothesize that, these are indicators of yet a new era about to unfold in the history of bark-cloth of the Baganda. However, it has not been my intention here to claim that the above transformations have dominated all other aspects of cultural production in Buganda; or by any means am I trying to suggest that there has been a total eclipse of the “traditional” functions of bark-cloth. The point not to be missed is that change is a continuous process and exists within a process of continuity. Whereas it is easy to conclude that due to the forces of modernity there has been a lineal change in the functions of the bark-cloth of the Baganda, my research findings have proved otherwise. Amidst these transformations, there has also been continuity as well as revival in the role and meaning of bark-cloth in various social traditions of the Baganda. In the next section, I highlight some of the cultural activities or events where the use of bark-cloth has survived the forces of modernity, and as I come to the end of this chapter, I will consider the revival in the use of bark-cloth in the customs of the Baganda that are still surviving in the twenty-first century.

9.6 Continuity of Bark-cloth in the Cultural Traditions of the Baganda

The most significant evidence of continuity in the cultural role and meaning of bark-cloth can be observed in the funeral rites²² of the Baganda both within the royal domain, and among the ordinary people. Even though the ceremony itself has, since the past century, become mingled with Christian ingredients, one can safely argue that the

²² There are two basic funeral rites in the traditions of the Baganda namely: *okuziika* (burial) and *okwabyu olumbe* (succession rites, alternatively known as last funeral rites). The two rituals involve the use of bark-cloth.

use of bark-cloth as an important symbol of investiture has prevailed relatively uninterrupted. In September 2002, I attended the last funeral rites of the late Daudi Mukasa, where I had the opportunity to observe the continuity in the use of bark-cloth in the succession rituals of the ordinary Baganda. This cultural event, locally referred to as *okwabya olumbe*, took place at the home of the deceased in Kikusa village, Busiro County, and his son David Buiya-Abalyawo was installed as the *omusika* (heir) during a liturgical service led by the Parish priest of Kisubi Catholic Parish. It was important to note how the ritual of *okussaako omusika* (installation of an heir) has been redefined in order to incorporate traditions of the past as well as modern Christian values.

After the priest had finished preaching the word of God, he then invited the representative of the *omukulu w'ekika ky'engeye* (head of the *ngeye*, colobus monkey clan), to come forward to perform the ritual of *okussaako omusika* because Mukasa belonged to this clan. Andrew Kaggwa called upon Buiya-Abalyawo to stand at the front door of the family house, where the installation ritual was going to take place. After reiterating the clan lineage, which extended to about eight generations from Mukasa, he then brought out a piece of bark-cloth, knotted it, and presented it to Buiya-Abalyawo, as a cultural symbol connecting him to his past generations. He then draped the bark-cloth over his right shoulder and handed him a spear while cautioning him to take care of the family as his father had done. He was also given a gourd of locally brewed beer to sip from. I was informed that the significance of the beer is to emphasize clan unity, which is an important aspect of Kiganda culture. Thereafter, Prossy Nakubulwa the *lubuga*, a female member who was chosen by the clan members to assist Buiya-Abalyawo in taking care of Mukasa's home, was also invited to come forward. She was made to sit on

a piece of bark-cloth next to the heir, and was given a peeling knife and a basket, as symbols of her new office. As with the heir, she too, was cautioned to take care of the family always remembering her duty as the food provider, hence the basket and knife.

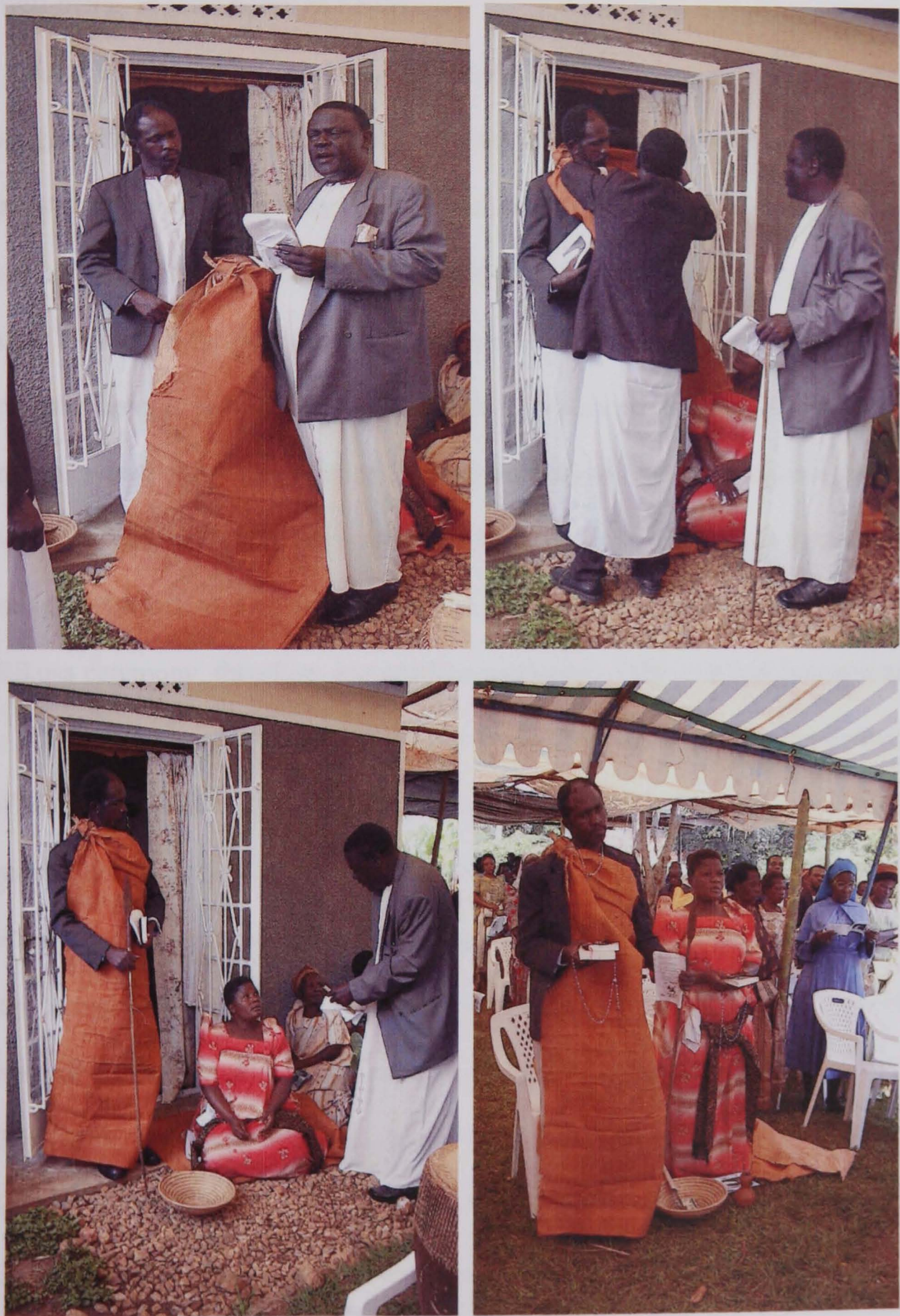


Plate 9.46 Succession Rites of the Baganda as performed in the 21st Century, courtesy of John Musisi

The sons and daughters of the deceased, who had gathered at the veranda of their family home as the succession rite was taking place, were then called upon to come forward to see the *musika*, and were given the assurance that he would take full responsibility over their well-being, as their father had done.

After this ceremony, the liturgical service resumed and the *musika* together with his *lubuga* were yet loaded with more symbolic objects, this time of the Christian faith. The priest gave the couple a Holy Bible, a book of the Order of the Catholic Service, and a rosary to remind them of their Christian faith, as they perform their duties henceforth assumed. The rest of the liturgy continued according to the normal procedures. The point to be noted here is that despite the Christian influences, such traditions relating to succession, which form the core of the cultural identity of the Baganda, and which involve the use of bark-cloth, have continued to be observed. In chapter two, I discussed the use of bark-cloth as a connecting symbol between the past and present generations. The Kikusa ceremony, therefore, exemplifies continuity of this cultural function of bark-cloth. Throughout my research, I have not come across any information alluding to the use of any other fabric in lieu of bark-cloth during the ritual of installation of an heir in Buganda although it was noted that the continuity of the succession rites among the Christian Baganda is most common among the Catholics because of the changes in African liturgy authorized by Vatican Council II, as discussed earlier in this chapter. Members of Reformed churches like the Pentecostals do not perform last funeral rites, and those who recognize this ritual, avoid the use of bark-cloth, and just present the *musika* before the public, and give him a Holy Bible. This evidence highlights the negative connotations still associated with bark-cloth within some church quarters.

Still in connection with cultural identity, bark-cloth has remained an important fabric used in the production and or preservation of objects of cultural importance. For example, even now (2005), many women in Buganda still consider it of utmost importance to preserve the umbilical cords of their children, and have continued to preserve them in bark-cloth not only as a custom but also because bark-cloth is rarely attacked by insects because of its chemical properties. In the royal domain, it is still a popular practice for the umbilical cords of the princes and princesses to be preserved in a highly decorative manner, using beadwork. During my visit to Kajaga palace at Katwe in Kyaddondo County, I witnessed the decoration of this cultural artefact, and observed the use of bark-cloth in this activity. As can be seen in plate 9.47, bark-cloth is used to encase the artefact before the beading is done, and most importantly, it is used to cover the environment where this cultural activity is carried out.



Plate 9.47 Omugirinya Nabulya Kizza beading a royal umbilical artefact at Kajaga Palace
Photo by the author

I was informed by *omugirinya* Nabulya Kizza, one of the royal artists in charge of decorating the royal regalia at Kajaga palace, that, “since bark-cloth is the connecting thread between the past and present generation, therefore any cultural activity relating to the Kiganda tradition, including the preservation of the umbilical cords of children, requires the use of bark-cloth” (“*olw’ensonga nti olubugo ke kabonero akatuyunga ku bajjajja ffe abatusooka, kale mu buli kintu kyonna ekikolebwa nga kyekuusa ku buwangwa bwaffe ng’Abaganda, gamba nga mu mulimo guno ogw’okuwunda abalangaira n’abambejja, tuba tulina okukozesa olubugo*”) (Nnabulya, interview, December, 2002). Nnabulya further explained to me that because her role as a royal beader has been handed on to her through the clan lineage, she finds it important to observe this role in the way her ancestors used to perform it. Therefore, when she is engaged in the beading process, she ensures that she covers herself, and her working environment with bark-cloth, which points to the continuity in the function and symbolic significance of bark-cloth.

9.7 Reviving Lost Traditions: Bark-cloth in the *Okwanjula* Ceremony

Earlier on in this research, I mentioned that the principle function of bark-cloth was as a dress material. I also pointed out that bark-cloth was an important fabric in the establishment of social relations; it was an essential item given as part of the dowry to the bride’s family. There is evidence which points to the use of bark-cloth in recent times, for sartorial purposes during the customary ceremony of *okwanjula* (introduction) when a man makes a formal visit to the family of his future spouse, in order to officially seek their approval. As a way of integrating traditions of the past within the present marriage

ceremonies, it has become a popular practice among some elite societies in Buganda to reinvent in a fashionable style, this tradition of dressing in bark-cloth. For example, during the *okwanjula* ceremony of *omumbejja* Barbara Nakayenga, which took place in 2003 at Kiteza, Lugazi in Kyaggwe County, *omumbejja* Nakayenga, together with her three aunties (who are also princesses), came out to greet her spouse Bruno Sserunkuuma, and the rest of the visitors while fully dressed in bark-cloth, as illustrated in plates 9.48 and 9.49 respectively.



Plate 9.48 *Okwanjula* Ceremony of *omumbejja* Barbara Nakayenga. From left to right are *abambejja* Max Najuuko, Barbara Nakayenga, Regina Batenga and Juliet Ssamunanya, Courtesy of Bruno Sserunkuuma, 2003



Plate 9.49 *Abambejja* Barbara Nakayenga, Regina Batenga and Juliet Ssaamunanya greeting the visitors
Courtesy of Bruno Sserunkuuma

As can be observed, whereas the style of dress is based on the traditions of the past, bark-cloth has been re-interpreted according to the modern cultural practices. We can notice that the *abambejja* are wearing several accessories including headbands, sashes and bracelets, which though made out of bark-cloth, are representations of the modern systems of fashion and dress. The point to be made here is that change is a continuous practice and even when a cultural act of the past is re-enacted it is likely to occur with some variations, which may sometimes not be easily recognizable by members of that particular society.

9.8 Concluding the Chapter

It has thus far been observed that until the late 1980s and early 1990s, art-training institutions did not encourage students to integrate cultural artefacts like bark-cloth into their art and design practices. But economic constraints gave way to the liberalization of the curriculum in order to allow the use of locally available materials, and to meet the changing needs of society. However, the restoration of the Buganda monarchy and the coronation of Muwenda Mutebi II as the 36th Kabaka of Buganda provoked serious visual research among art institutions in Uganda, most especially at Makerere art school, into the aesthetic qualities and the applicability of bark-cloth in modern art and design practice. It has been a complex representation of a multitude of functions and meanings.

From the data collected, it has emerged that in the contemporary perspective, bark-cloth is no longer only associated with ‘ritual’ in the strict sense of the word. The symbolic capital of bark-cloth is in a continuous flux dependent on the way people in Buganda are influenced by, and respond to the historical, political, economic and socio-cultural shifts within their immediate environment. It has also been observed that art gallery establishments have played an important role in promoting new developments in the creative use of cultural artefacts like bark-cloth. On the other hand, contact with the international community through education, travel, and easy access to mass media by way of television, magazines and the internet, has contributed to the transformation process. Tourists and members of the diplomatic corps in Uganda have been an equally influential social-category because of their keen interest in the patronage of the “fine” arts, which has made artists aware of the benefits of using distinctive visual signs and symbols while communicating to this artistically elite community. Moreover, Jonathan

Friedman has pointed out that, “Consumption within the bounds of the world system is always a consumption of identity, canalized by a negotiation between self-definition and an array of possibilities offered by the capitalist market (2002: 235). It can as well be said that cultural production in the bounds of the world system has become a production of identity, canalized by a negotiation between self-definition and an array of possibilities offered by globalisation. However, I posit that the future of bark-cloth of the Baganda is contingent on the artists’ ability to re-invent its functions, and above all, to make the artworks aesthetically and functionally accessible both to the local and foreign consumers.

10 SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Throughout this thesis I have discussed the theoretical problems associated with the notion of change and continuity in the functions and meaning of bark-cloth of the Baganda. The thesis of the investigation was built on the hypothesis that various shifts in the social, political and economic structures in Buganda have influenced change in the design and usage of bark-cloth, thus continuously investing it with new meaning. I believe that the evidence gathered and analysed substantiates the above hypothesis. The ideas that have emanated from this discussion are mainly drawn from various sources and meta-discourses on the general history of Buganda although I also considered it paramount to situate the study within the general scholarship of textile history, and cultural studies. I found it necessary to examine the history of Buganda from the foundation of the kingdom to the present. This of course may seem to have been an ambitious task, but it was the only practical way by which change and continuity in the functions and symbolic significance of bark-cloth could be closely articulated. It became obvious to me from the preliminary stage that an investigation of such a breadth could best be tackled by using a combination of research methods and tools.

The research has proved that the study of the aesthetic and cultural functions of bark-cloth of the Baganda can best be understood by addressing the social, economic and political history of the kingdom of Buganda. I have endeavoured to bring together the above divergent variables, which as has been observed, are germane to the articulation of the transformation and retention of the role and meaning of bark-cloth.

It has been noted that bark-cloth in Buganda has always had cultural as well economic value. It was culturally important because as a shroud, it served and continues to serve as a connecting thread between the past and present generations of the Baganda, and as a material for dress, bark-cloth served as a marker of social hierarchies. Economically, bark-cloth was a main trade item and a major source of wealth for the Baganda. Aspects relating to the origins of bark-cloth in Buganda have been examined although it is still difficult to reach any conclusions due to the variant theories on the subject. However, it was observed that the bark-cloth industry reached its peak around the late eighteenth-century when Buganda was politically in its prime. The annexation of Buddu to Buganda during this period was an influential factor in the growth of the bark-cloth industry in Buganda, as Buddu was at the time already established as a hub of bark-cloth production in the East African interior.

The infiltration of the East African interior, first by the Swahili-Arab traders, and later, by Western missionaries and Colonial administrators, paved the way for accession to exotic goods and ideas, which transformed the production of bark-cloth, and later dislodged most of the original functions of this fabric. The culture of bark-cloth decoration has been cited as a possible outcome of this contact. It has been speculated that the direct trade relations between the Swahili-Arabs and the Baganda resulted in the cross-cultural transfer of ideas and skills in fabric decoration, which later translated into the patterning of bark-cloth, initially exclusively, for royal usage. However, after the 1860s, significant changes occurred when the Swahili-Arabs concretized trade relations with Kabaka Muteesa I. As the latter gained access to exotic textiles, he set a new trend in the royal dress tradition, and thereby loosened the grip on the royal patronage of the

bark-cloth industry. The change in the dress tradition within the royal domain thus liberalized trade in bark-cloth across the region.

It was stated that the arrival of European missionaries at Muteesa I's palace during the last part of the 1870s, and their introduction of Christianity in Buganda further prejudiced the symbolic value of bark-cloth. Christianity, as was taught by the first missionaries, simply could not mix with local traditions if the ultimate aim was to convert the African, body and soul, into a new being. Therefore many of the indigenous traditions like bark-cloth production were marginalized and others were removed from the social-calendar although a more considerable blow to the bark-cloth industry came as a result of the Western capitalist expansion campaign, which led to the colonization of Buganda in 1894 by the British.

It was observed that the signing of an agreement of "protection" between the British and Kabaka Mwanga II in 1900, which culminated in the redistribution of land, and the introduction of a hut-tax system in Buganda, were among the twentieth-century twists that aggravated the transformation of the bark-cloth industry. The mandatory cultivation of cash crops especially cotton, suppressed the indigenous agricultural and technological practices, like bark-cloth manufacture. Nonetheless, not all doors were closed because bark-cloth still commanded a relatively high value in the neighbouring kingdoms of Ankole. Hence, several people, especially from Buddu County, the biggest producer of bark-cloth in Buganda, resorted to this avenue as a means to raise money to pay the required hut tax although this did not last a lifetime.

It was made clear that the threats posed to British interests during the First World War took their toll on the bark-cloth industry, as more than a hundred thousand bark-

cloth trees were felled in the counties of Buddu and Kooki, for the construction of military camps, and to clear the war zone along the southern boundaries of Uganda and German East Africa. Hence it took possibly another five years or more, after the war, for new bark-cloth trees to reach harvesting maturity. With the changes in the administrative structure of Buganda, the subsequent land reforms and the change in the pattern of subsistence agriculture, the discontinuation of the royal taxes, and the massive felling of bark-cloth trees in the most productive counties, the bark-cloth industry of the Baganda came to a near demise. It was further mentioned that proposed changes in constitutional policy during the mid-twentieth century sparked conflicts between the Baganda and the colonial government that culminated in the deposition of the Kabaka, an event that transformed the symbolic code of bark-cloth beyond the cultural and economic boundaries, to a symbol of defiance against colonial rule.

On the educational front, it was noted that new developments paved the way for further changes in the functions and symbolic code of bark-cloth. The Westernization of education at all levels had a significant impact on the production, role and meaning of bark-cloth among the Baganda. Indigenous skills were devalued in favour of the 3R's, and as the new mode of education became confined within the "school" (confined spaces away from home environment) the young generation lost the opportunity to acquire adequate skills in indigenous practices including the technology of bark-cloth production.

Margaret Trowell, whose participation in the development of an African form of art education (though in a Europeanized style), was singled out. It was explained that Trowell helped to channel some of the indigenous art practices back into the mainstream education, even though in her own art school at Makerere, she did not particularly

encourage the use of local artefacts in the visual-cultural activities. Nevertheless, as it was observed, the visual foundation she laid has since been instrumental to the promotion of artistic developments in the education system, and it formed a foundation for the ongoing creative developments in the use of bark-cloth.

It was further stated that the political crisis that ensued after Uganda had attained independence in 1962, and the associated economic difficulties, were among other factors that encouraged the use of local materials although serious consideration for the usage of bark-cloth is a recent phenomenon. It was mentioned that the end of the civil war in 1986, and the restoration of the Buganda monarchy and other cultural institutions that had been abolished by the Obote government in 1967, has been a contributing factor to the ongoing artistic developments involving the use of bark-cloth. As it was observed, since the coronation of Kabaka Ronald Muwenda Mutebi II, bark-cloth has once again become a prominent artefact, and it currently occupies a central position in the visual-cultural discussions relating to ethnicity, self-identity and the notion of *Gandaness*. Moreover Edward Shill rightly pointed out that “The connection which binds a society to its past can never die out completely” (1981:328).

Further, it was noted that the meaning of bark-cloth has continued to be re-interpreted even after the restoration of the Buganda monarchy. In addition to local politics and culture, global influences that have been made possible by international tourism and the quick transfer of information worldwide has brought about intercultural awareness and cross-cultural exchange of visual information that has played a key role in the transformation of the application, role and meaning of bark-cloth of the Baganda. The aesthetic enquiry into the potential of bark-cloth as a medium of visual communication.

and the commoditisation of bark-cloth in the form of tourist art has had a positive as well as negative impact on the symbolic value, and the future of the bark-cloth industry.

Driven by economic motives, several players in the cultural industry have tried to reconstruct the cultural past using the medium of bark-cloth, and have attempted to sell it in a new package, based on their own lived experiences as well as on the imagined international expectations that have accrued from globalization. On the positive side, the incorporation of bark-cloth in “fine” and “popular” culture is a helpful way to dissolve the aura that has been associated with bark-cloth for more than a century. It was observed that artists and designers have successfully re-introduced bark-cloth to society in a new and demystified manner by aligning it with international trends of fashion and sports. These latest visual-cultural activities involving the use of bark-cloth, as discussed in this study, have provided yet a new impetus to the bark-cloth industry of the Baganda. I envisage that the future of the bark-cloth industry will be increasingly dependent upon the patronage of the arts, and upon further commodification. Consequently, it will be important to engage in further research into the design possibilities of bark-cloth by creating synergies between indigenous knowledge and innovation in design, science and technology. The revival of bark-cloth should not only focus on the production of art and design objects in the interest of the international market demands but should also focus on establishing a local demand for bark-cloth design products. Lastly, a more conscious approach to selection and application of bark-cloth in art and design practice should help to preserve the aesthetic of the *kimote* bark-cloth typology, by which the Baganda have been known and praised for the past three centuries.

The strength of this research lies in the fact that it has employed a multi-disciplinary approach in order to bring into focus the transformation in the role and meaning of bark-cloth in Buganda. It has drawn from theories in history of art, textile history, political and economic history, cultural studies, semiotics, sociology and social psychology, which have been integrated with ethnographic data from key regions in Buganda. The outcomes of this study could serve as a model in investigating the history of bark-cloth in other regions of Africa or elsewhere in the world, where there is lack of documented material on this tradition. The study would be a helpful guide into other researches within the general study of material culture not only relating to Buganda but also to other regions, especially those that were once under colonial administration. It has not been possible within the scope of this research, to investigate how bark-cloth is being used by the tourists and members of the Baganda diaspora in different parts of the world, or how the transformation in the tradition of bark-cloth making and usage in Buganda could be compared with similar traditions elsewhere around the world. I cannot therefore claim that I have covered exhaustively all the aspects relating to the bark-cloth of the Baganda; I believe that there is still plenty of room for further research.

GLOSSARY

Abaana b'engoma	royals
abagalagala	royal pages and students (males) in courtly schools
abakopi	peasants, commoners or ordinary people
abakungu	administrative chiefs in Buganda
abalongo	twins; decorated artifacts encasing the umbilical cords of twins or members of the royal family
abalungana	Africans who served as porters on the Swahili-Arab caravans to Buganda
abasomi	readers; learners; followers of Christianity
abataka	clan heads
Allah	God
amabugo	financial contributions towards burial arrangements
amakula	royal presents
amateeka	commandments
amatooke	different kinds of plantains
Ankole	kingdom in southwestern Uganda, also see Nkore
arabica	specie of coffee
Baganda	people of the kingdom of Buganda
Bahima	ethnic group in western Uganda
Bannabikira	religious congregation of nuns in Uganda
Bannabuddu	residents of Buddu
balubaale	deities
bambejja	princesses

Banyankole	people of Ankole
Banyoro	people of Bunyoro Kingdom
Basoga	people of Busoga
Bassekabaka	past Kings
Batoro	people of Tooro Kingdom in western Uganda
Bikira	a Catholic Parish in Buddu County
Buddu	County in the south of the kingdom of Buganda
Buganda	Kingdom in central-southern Uganda
Bunyoro	Kingdom in central-western Uganda
Busoga	Kingdom in Eastern Uganda, formerly a vassal state of Buganda
Bwanda	convent of the Bannabikira Sisters
looti	Kiganda corruption of <i>ddooti</i> , a coastal terminology for standard measurement of cloth, which was equivalent to four yards. Among the Baganda the term was used to refer to a yardage of unbleached cotton fabric
ddumbi	long rainy season (September- December)
ebitoogo	papyrus stalks
ebitooma	Kinyankole word for bark-cloth
ekibanyi	storage compartment above the fire place
ekibira	literally translated a “forest” but it refers to that part of the mausoleum where the graves of the past kings of Buganda are located, usually separated with a bark-cloth curtain
ekikaaku	bark cloth made from the first harvest of a ficus tree
ekikomo	copper

ekikunta	un-steamed bark-cloth
ekisaakaate	chiefs' enclosure
ekiwu	royal carpet comprising of bark-cloth upon which is placed in the following order, a cow skin, a lion skin and a leopard skin
ekkomagiro	bark cloth house
ekkooti	Western-style jacket
ekyanikwa	open space used for the oxidation of bark cloth
ekyano	same as <i>ekyanikwa</i>
ekyayi	banana fibre
embira	beads of a bigger size
embugo	bark-cloths
embugo entone	patterned bark-cloths
emidaali	medals of saints worn by Catholics
engoye	general term for textiles, garments
engoye eza Jinja	textiles manufactured by NYTIL
engoye eza ppamba	cotton-clothes
enguugu	crown of the Kabaka
ensansa	palm leaves
ensimbi eng'anda	cowries
ensinda	blue beads
envujjo	tithe on products and agricultural produce charged by the chiefs and landlords
ficus	genera of bark cloth trees
Ganda	anything attributed to the Baganda, e.g. Ganda art

Gandanise	corruption of terms and names from another language to Luganda, language of the Baganda
hadith	Islamic teaching
hajj	title given to a Muslim who undertook the pilgrimage to the Holy Places in Mecca
Hima	anything attributed to the Bahima, e.g. Hima huts
Kabaka	title for the King of Buganda
Kabakaship	Kingship
Kamba	people of Ukamba province in western Kenya
kanga	rectangular patterned-fabric with border design
kanzu	long white robe worn by the Baganda males
kasanvu	mandatory labour on government projects
Katikkiro	title for the Prime minister of Buganda
khadi	Indian terminology for locally spun hand-woven cotton fabric; corrupted in Luganda to refer to the gomesi (“traditional” garment for Baganda women) used for daily wear
khamith	type of shirt (in Arabic); also see qamis
khila	diplomatic presents
kibuga	royal capital
kika	clan; typology
kinyankole	term used to denote anything associated with the Banyankole, for example Kinyankole dress style
kimote	quality bark-cloth processed by way of steaming
kirundu	False-muvule tree <i>antiaris toxicaria</i> ; a beige-colored bark-cloth made from the bark of false-muvule

kitaka	brown hue
kitsutu	type of kanga
Kooki	a county in the south of the kingdom of Buganda
Kuluggi	royal guard in charge of the treasury
lubuga	title given to the Queen-sister, same as Nnalinya; general term for a female figure appointed as assistant to the heir during succession rites
Luganda	language of the Baganda
mailo	freehold land tenure
nanza	cloth, in the language of the Kamba
Nkore	kingdom in western Uganda, see Ankole
Nnalinya	title given to the Queen-sister; also known as Lubuga
Nnamasole	title given to the Queen mother
Nnamulondo	Royal accession stool
obukeedo	shredded banana-leaf stalks used for making baskets
obuso	raffia
obusuulu	annual ground rent given to landlords
obutiiti	small beads
okukiika embuga	to pay homage to the Kabaka
okusoma	to read; to pray; to go to church
okwanjula	introduction ceremony
olubiri	palace
olubugo	piece of bark-cloth
olubugo olutone	piece of patterned bark-cloth

olugoye	a piece of textile, a garment
olukiiko	Buganda Royal Council
olusinda	blue bead
olusuku	plantain garden
omudaali	medal, as above
omugugu	bale containing ten pieces of bark cloth
omukomazi	bark-cloth maker
omukopi	peasant, ordinary person
omukulu w'ekika	clan head
omulangira	prince
omulongo	twin; decorated artifact encasing the umbilical cord of a twin or a member of the royal family
omumbejja	princess
omusika	heir
okussaako omusika	officiating an heir to the deceased
omutanda	piece of bark-cloth
omutuba	bark cloth tree, <i>ficus natalensis</i> ; sub-clan lineage
enkandaggo	tripod for support during the harvest of bark-cloth
ensaamo	bark-cloth mallet
olulagala	banana leaf
olulagala oluwotose ku muliro	smoked banana leaf
olutabaalo	war expedition
okutta omukago	to enter into a special relationship with someone
omwaka	calendar year; season of harvest

qamis	shirt (in Arabic) also see khamith
robusta	specie of coffee
salam	Arab greeting
Ssaza	County
Ssekabaka	title given to the departed King
Sharia	Divine law of Islam
Tiraz	dyed textiles and garments reserved for Arab rulers
Tooro	Kingdom in western Uganda
Ukamba	province in western Kenya

APPENDIX 1

FORMAL INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS CONDUCTED DURING THE PERIOD BETWEEN FEBRUARY 2001 AND JANUARY 2004

	Name	Position	Location/County	Date
1	Barbara Nakayenga	Craft dealer	Uganda Crafts Village (Kyaddondo County)	12/02/2001
2	Namwandu R. Nkata	Crafts producer	Mukono (Kyaggwe County)	16.02.2001
3	Amina Kabengano	Crafts producer	Mukono (Kyaggwe County)	16/02/2001
4	Edisa Namisango	Crafts producer	Mukono (Kyaggwe County)	16/02/2001
5	Lucia Nakalanzi	Crafts producer	Mukono (Kyaggwe County)	16/02/2001
6	Rovinca Nambassa	Crafts producer	Mukono (Kyaggwe County)	16/02/2001
7	Justina Nakajubi	Crafts producer	Mukono (Kyaggwe County)	16/02/2001
8	Nnalongo Mbazzi	Crafts dealer	Uganda Crafts Village (Kyaddondo County)	18/02/2001
9	Nuwa Nyanzi	Artist/ Gallery owner	Nyanzi Studios-Uganda Crafts Village (Kyaddondo County)	18/02/2001
10	Elly Tumwiine	Artist/ Gallery owner	Creations- Nakasero (Kyaddondo County)	18/02/2001
11	Josephine Wanyana Mukasa	Artist/ art instructor/ Surface Design Consultant	Makerere University Kampala (Kyaddondo County)	21/02/2001
12	Sarah Nakisanze	Artist	Makerere University (Kyaddondo County)	21/02/2001
13	Justine Igala	Artist	Kampala (Kyaddondo County)	25/02/2001
14	Joseph K. Lwanga	Elder	Ssembabule (Mawogola County)	2/03/2001
15	Bernado Kizito	Bark-cloth maker/ elder	Kitokoro (Buddu County)	10/03/2001
16	Veronica Nakalanda	Bark-cloth trader	Musigula market (Kyaddondo County)	12/03/2001
17	Francis Nnaggenda	Artist / instructor	Makerere University	17/02/2002
18	Namwandu Maria Kasule	Elder /Wife of deceased bark-cloth maker/Elder	Kassebuti (Buddu County)	24/05/2002
19	Bedesta Musoke	Retired bark-cloth maker and trader	Kassebuti (Buddu County)	24.05/2002

20	Anonymous interviewee	Elder	Villa Maria (Buddu County)	14/06/2002
21	Lucy Magoba	Fashion Student	Makerere University (Kyaddondo County)	16/06/2002
22	Zaituni Kakyama	Fashion Student	Makerere University	16/06/2002
23	Rujuta Rona	Jewellery Student	Makerere University	16/06/2002
24	Omulangira Kansere G. William	Bark-cloth maker and trader/ elder	Kibanda A (Buddu County)	21/06/2002
25	Ventino Majwala	Bark-cloth maker and trader (retired)/ elder	Kibanda B (Buddu County)	21/06/2002
26	Johh Bbaale	Bark-cloth maker and trader	Kibanda B (Buddu County)	22/06/2002
27	Charles Lumala Luswata	Bark-cloth maker and trader	Kibanda B (Buddu County)	22/06/2002
28	Bazili Lukwago	Bark-cloth maker / Chairperson of Kabira Bark-cloth Makers' Association	Kifuuta (Buddu County)	22/06/2002
29	Focus group discussion	Bark-cloth makers, traders and elders	Kifuuta (Buddu County)	22/06/2002
30	John Kalagi	Bark-cloth maker	Kibanda A (Buddu County)	23/06/2002
31	Ben Gwawula	Bark-cloth trader	Kibanda A (Buddu County)	23/06/2002
32	Noah M. Muzinda	Bark-cloth trader	Kibanda A (Buddu County)	23/06/2002
33	Focus group discussion	Bark-cloth makers, traders and elders	Kabira (Buddu County)	24/06/2002
34	Peter Kivumbi	Bark-cloth trader/ elder	Kyamubejja (Buddu County)	26/06/2002
35	Mikaya Ssemukasa	Bark-cloth maker and trader (retired)/ elder	Kyamubejja (Buddu County)	26/06/2002
36	Focus Group discussion	Elders of Kyamubejja, Mayanja and Kyannyonyi	Mayanja (Buddu County)	26/06/2002
37	Joseph Ndongwa	Bark-cloth maker/ elder	Kyamubejja (Buddu County)	26/06/2002
38	Paulo Katabalwa	Bark-cloth maker/ elder	Kyamubejja (Buddu County)	26/06/2002
39	Namwandu Sarapio Lukomera	Wife of a deceased bark-cloth maker/elder	Kyamubejja (Buddu County)	26/06/2002
40	Paulo Kazigo	Bark-cloth maker/elder	Kyamubejja (Buddu County)	27/06/2002
41	Yoana Lwanga	Bark-cloth maker/ elder	Kyannyonyi (Buddu)	27/06/2002

42	Sam Ssebbaale	Bark-cloth maker and trader	Kyamubejja (Buddu County)	27/06/2002
43	Mikaya Semukasa	Retired bark-cloth maker	Kyamubejja (Buddu County)	27/06/2002
44	Focus Group discussion	Elders, bark-cloth makers and traders	Kakuuto (Buddu County)	28/06/2002
45	Focus Group discussion	Elders, bark-cloth makers and traders	Kannabulemu (Buddu County)	1/07/2002
46	Omumbejja Barbara Nakayenga	Craft dealer	Uganda Crafts Village (Kyaddondo County)	14/07/2002
47	Kasozi Dora	Ass. Art-instructor/postgraduate student	Makerere University	20/07/2002
48	Annette Natocho	Artist	Kansanga (Kyaddondo County)	27/07/2002
49	Ssengendo P. Nsibambi	Artist/ Art instructor	Makerere University (Kyaddondo County)	31/07/2002
50	Expedito Ssenkungu	Royal Bark-cloth maker/ Muyigula/elder from Kyanja (Mawokota County)	Mengo Palace	03/08/2002
51	Petero Kabogozza	Royal bark-cloth maker from Nsangwa (Mawokota County)	Mengo Palace	3/08/2002
52	Ssaalongo Sembatya	Royal bark-cloth maker/ clan sub head/elder from Ffunvu (Mawokota County)	Mengo Palace	3/08/2002
53	Busuulwa Emmanuel Kinyanyambali	Royal bark-cloth maker/ elder from Jjalamba (Mawokota County)	Mengo Palace	3/08/2002
54	Petero Kankanka	Bark-cloth maker/ elder from Bukoona (Buddu County)	Mengo Palace (Kyaddondo County)	3/08/2002
55	Diana Nambogo Mpendo	Bark-cloth consumer	Kampala (Kyaddondo County)	3/08/2002
56	Ruth Ssempe	Bark-cloth consumer	Kampala (Kyaddondo County)	03/08/2002
57	Nabulya Kizza	Decorator of royal insignia	Kajaga Palace- Katwe (Kyaddondo)	03/08/2002
58	Eneriko Kambaza	Bark-cloth maker/ Elder	Kyekumbya (Singo County)	17/09/2002
59	Kizito-Maria Kasule	Artist/ Art instructor	Makerere University (Kyaddondo County)	24/09/2002
60	Eriya Nsubuga	Artist/ graduate student	Makerere University	26/09/2002

61	Yosefina Nandyose	Muzaana	Wamala Royal Tombs (Busiro County)	2/09/2002
62	Jenny Kyeyune Namuwonge	Artist/ art instructor	St. Peters Sen. School Nsambya (Kyaddondo County)	03/10/2002
63	Keefa Ssempangi	Artist/ head of royal sub-lineage	Makerere University (Kyaddondo County)	07/10/2002
64	Sarah Nakisanze	Artist/ instructor and postgraduate student	Makerere University	08/10/2002
65	Bruno Sserunkuuma	Artist, art instructor, craft dealer	Makerere University	12/10/2002
66	Joseph Musoke Lwanyaga	Artist/ tour guide	Kasubi Royal tombs (Kyaddondo County)	18/10/2002
67	George Senteza	Art student/ tour guide	Kasubi Royal Tombs	18/10/2002
68	Katarina Kikome	Descendant of royal wife of Muteesa I	Kasubi Royo Tombs	18/10/2002
69	Anonymous	Elder/ diviner	Busiro County	21/10/2002
70	Sr. Immaculate Nambi	Artist/ art instructor	Bwanda Convent of Bannabikira Sisters (Buddu County)	02/11/2002
71	Anonymous	Elder	Kyaddondo County	14/11/2002
72	Angella Nakate Lwanga	Crafts producer (retired) /elder	Ssembabule (Mawogola County)	23/12/2002
73	Joseph H. Lwanga	Elder	Ssembabule (Mawogola County)	23/12/2002
74	Erifaazi Ssaazi	Elder	Busega (Kyaddondo)	28/12/2002
75	Richard Kabiito	Artist / art instructor	Makerere University	30/12/2002
76	Rose Kirumira Nnamubiru	Artist/ art instructor	Makerere University	18/01/2004
77	Uziel Rivca Rebecca	Artist	Kampala (relocated back to Israel)	26/01/2003
78	Ivan Yakuze	Artist	Nnakulabye (Kyaddondo County)	29/01/2004

APPENDIX 2

KEY EVENTS ATTENDED IN JULY 2001- JANUARY 2003

	Event	Venue / County	Date
1	8 th Coronation Anniversary of Kabaka Muwenda Mutebi II	MuGgulu-Mukono (Kyagwe)	31/07/2001
2	Introduction Ceremony	Bwendero- Ssesse	22/08/2001
3	Funeral	Ssembabule- Mawogola	23/01/2002
4	Art Exhibition	Makerere Art Gallery (Kyaddondo)	01/02/2002
5	Funeral	Mityana (Singo)	15/02/2002
6	Art Exhibition	NommoGallery (Kyaddondo)	12/04/2002
7	Art Exhibition	TulifanyaGallery (Kyaddondo)	14/04/2002
8	Wedding ceremony	Masaka (Buddu)	04/05/2002
9	Funeral	Kyamubejja (Buddu)	26/06/2002
10	End of Year Art Exhibition	Kyambogo University (Busiro)	03/07/2002
11	End of Year Art Exhibition	MakerereUniversity (Kyaddondo)	14/07/2002
12	'Women's World' 3 rd International Congress on Women	Makerere University	12-18/07/2002
13	End of Year Art Exhibition	NkumbaUniversity (Busiro)	17/07/2002
14	9 th Coronation Anniversary	Lubiri-Mengo (Kyaddondo)	02/08/2002
15	Introduction Ceremony	Kawuku (Buddu)	04/08/2002
16	Art Exhibition	Tulifanya Gallery (Kyaddondo)	24/09/2002
17	Cultural Festival by THETA	National Theatre- Kampala	26/09/2002
18	Last Funeral rites	Kikusa (Busiro)	28/09/2002
19	African Cultural Week	National Theatre	22/11/2002
20	Art Exhibition	Uganda Germany Cultural Society- Kampala (Kyaddondo)	03/12/2002
21	Art Exhibition	Tulifanya Gallery	27/01/2003

APPENDIX 3

DYNASTIC CHRONOLOGY OF BUGANDA KINGS

King	Dates of Reign
Kato Kintu	1314-1344
Chwa Nnabaka I	1344-1374
Kimera	1374-1404
Tembo	1404-1434
Kigala Mukaabya Kkungubu	1434-1464
Kiyimba	1464-1494
Kayima	1494-1524
Nakibinge	1494-1594
Mulondo	1524-1539
Jjemba	1539-1544
Suuna I	1554-1584
Ssekamanya	1554-1599
Kimbugwe	1599-1614
Kateregga	1614-1644
Mutebi I	1644-1654
Jjuuko	1654-1664
Kayemba	1664-1674
Tebandeke	1674-1689
Ndawula	1689-1704
Kagulu Tebuucwereke	1704-1714
Kikulwe	1714-1724
Mawanda	1724-1734
Mwanga I	1734-1744
Namugala	1744-1754
Kyabaggu	1754-1764
Jjunju	1764-1779
Ssemakokiro	1779-1794
Kamanya	1794-1824
Suuna II	1824-1856
Muteesa I	1856-1884
Mwanga II	1884-1888, 1888-1897
Kiweewa	1888
Kalema	1888
Daudi Chwa II	1897-1939
Edward Frederick Muteesa II	1939-1969
Ronald Muwenda Mutebi II	1993-present

APPENDIX 4

LIST OF UGANDAN LEADERS FROM COLONIAL RULE UNTIL PRESENT

	Name	Period
1	British Administrators under the IBEA Company	1890-1893
2	Sir Gerald Portal. Acting Commissioner	March-May 1893
3	Captain J. R. Macdonald. Acting Commissioner	June-October 1893
4	Colonel H. Colvile. Acting Commissioner	November 1893- November 1894
5	F. J. Jackson. Acting Commissioner; * became Governor	December 1894-July 1895; August 1897- March 1898; *1911
6	Major T. Ternan. Acting Commissioner	January-July 1897
7	Mr. Ernest J. Berkeley. Commissioner	1895-1896; 1898-1899
8	Sir Harry Johnston. Commissioner	1899- 1902
9	Sir James Hayes-Sadler. Commissioner	1902-1905
10	Sir Hesketh Bell. Commissioner; *became Governor	1905; *1905 - 1911
*	Sir Frederick Jackson. Governor	1911-1917
11	Sir Robert Coryndon. Governor	1917-1922
12	Sir Geoffrey Archer. Governor	1922- 1925
13	Sir William Gowers. Governor	1925-1932
14	Sir Bernard Bourdillon. Governor	1932-1935
15	Sir Philip Mitchell. Governor	1935-1940
16	Sir Charles Dundas. Governor	1940-1944
17	Sir John Hall. Governor	1944-1952
18	Sir Andrew Cohen. Governor	1952-1957
19	Sir Frederick Crawford. Governor	1957-1961
20	Sir Frederick Edward Muteesa II. President	1962-1966
21	Apollo Milton Obote. President	1967-1971; 1980-1985
22	Idi Amin Dada. President	1971-1979
23	Yusuf Lule. President	1979
24	Godfrey Lukongwa Binaisa. President	1980
25	Paulo Muwanga. Interim President/Chairman of Military Council	1980
26	Tito Okello. President	1985
27	Yoweri Kaguta Museveni. President	1986-Present

* Until 1905, the colonial chief administrators were given title of Commissioner. Thereafter, this title was changed to Governor following the transfer of the office of Buganda's (and Uganda's) affairs to the Colonial Office. From 1962, when Uganda attained independence, heads of Government assumed the title of President.

APPENDIX 5

THE UGANDA AGREEMENT OF 1900

We, the undersigned, to wit, Sir Henry Hamilton Johnston, K.C.B., Her Majesty's Special Commissioner, Commander-in-Chief and Consul-General for the Uganda Protectorate and the adjoining Territories, on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India, on the one part; and the under-mentioned Regents and chiefs of the Kingdom of Uganda on behalf of the Kabaka (King) of Uganda, and the chiefs and people of Uganda, on the other part; do hereby agree to the following Articles relative to the government and administration of the Kingdom of Uganda.

1. The boundaries of the Kingdom of Uganda shall be the following: starting from the left bank of the Victoria Nile at the Ripon Falls, the boundary shall follow the left bank of the Victoria Nile into Lake Kioga, and thence shall be continued along the centre of Lake Kioga, and again along the Victoria Nile as far as the confluence of the River Kafu, opposite the town of Mruli. From this point the boundary shall be carried along the right or eastern bank of the River Kafu, up stream, as far as the junction of the Kafu and Embaia. From this point the boundary shall be carried in a straight line to the River Nkusi, and shall follow the left bank of the River Nkusi down stream to its entrance into the Albert Nyanza. The boundary shall then be carried along the coast of the Albert Nyanza in a south-westerly direction as far as the mouth of the River Kuzizi, and thence shall be carried up stream along the right bank of the river Kuzizi to near its source. From a point near the source of the Kuzizi and near the village of Kirola (such point to be finally determined by Her Majesty's Commissioner at the time of the definite Survey of Uganda) the boundary shall be carried in a south-westerly direction until it reaches the River Nabutari, the left bank of which it will follow down Stream to its confluence with the River Katonga. The boundary shall then be carried up stream along the left bank of the River Katonga, as far as the point opposite the confluence of the Chungaga, after which, crossing the Katonga, the boundary shall be carried along the right bank of the said Chungaga River up stream to its source; and from its source the boundary shall be drawn in a south-easterly direction to the point where the Byoloba River enters Lake Kachira; and shall then be continued along the centre of Lake Kachira to its south-eastern extremity, where the River Bukova leaves the lake, from which point the boundary shall be carried in a south-easterly direction to the Anglo-German frontier. The boundary shall then follow the Anglo-German frontier to the coast of the Victoria Nyanza and thence shall be drawn across the waters of the Victoria Nyanza in such a manner as to include within the limits of the Kingdom of Uganda the Sese Archipelago (including Kosi and Mazinga), Ugaya, Lufu, Igwe, Buvuma, and Lingira Islands. The boundary, after including Lingira Islands, shall be carried through Napoleon Gulf until it reaches the starting point of its definition at Bugungu at the Ripon Falls on the Victoria Nile. To avoid any misconception it is intended by this definition to include within the boundaries of Uganda all the islands lying off the north-west coast of the Victoria Nyanza in addition to those specially mentioned.

2. The Kabaka and chiefs of Uganda hereby agree henceforth to renounce in favour of Her Majesty the Queen any claims to tribute they may have had on the adjoining provinces of the Uganda Protectorate.

3. The Kingdom of Uganda in the administration of Uganda Protectorate shall rank as a province of equal rank with any other provinces into which the Protectorate may be divided.

4. The revenue of the Kingdom of Uganda, collected by the Uganda Administration, will be merged in the general revenue of the Uganda Protectorate, as will that of the other provinces of this Protectorate.

5. The laws made for the general governance of the Uganda Protectorate by Her Majesty's Government will be equally applicable to the Kingdom of Uganda, except in so far as they may in any particular conflict with the terms of this Agreement, in which case the terms of this Agreement will constitute a special exception in regard to the Kingdom of Uganda.

6. So long as the Kabaka, Chiefs, and people of Uganda shall conform to the laws and regulations instituted for their governance by Her Majesty's Government and shall co-operate loyally with Her Majesty's Government in the organization and administration of the said Kingdom of Uganda, Her Majesty's Government agrees to recognize the Kabaka of Uganda as the native ruler of the province of Uganda under Her Majesty's protection and over-rule. The King of Uganda shall henceforth be styled His Highness the Kabaka of Uganda. On the death of a Kabaka, his successor shall be elected by a majority of votes in the Lukiko, or native council. The range of selection, however, must be limited to the Royal Family of Uganda, that is to say, to the descendants of King Mutesa. The name of the person chosen by the native council must be submitted to Her Majesty's Government for approval, and no person shall be recognized as Kabaka of Uganda whose election has not received the approval of Her Majesty's Government. The jurisdiction of the native Court of the Kabaka of Uganda, however, shall not extend to any person not a native of the Uganda province. The Kabaka's courts shall be entitled to try natives for capital crimes, but no death sentence may be carried out by the Kabaka, or his Courts, without the sanction of Her Majesty's representative in Uganda. Moreover, there will be a right of appeal from the native Courts to the principle Court of Justice established by Her Majesty in the Kingdom of Uganda as regards all sentences which inflict a term of more than five years' imprisonment or a fine of over £100. In the case of any other sentences imposed by the Kabaka's Courts, which may seem to Her Majesty's Government disproportioned or inconsistent with humane principles, Her Majesty's representatives in Uganda shall have the right of remonstrance with the Kabaka, who shall, at the request of the said representative, subject such sentence to reconsideration.

The Kabaka of Uganda shall be guaranteed by Her Majesty's Government from out of the local revenue of the Uganda Protectorate a minimum yearly allowance of £500 a year. During the present Kabaka's minority, however, in lieu of the above-mentioned subvention, there will be paid to the master of his household, to meet his household expenditure, £100 a year, and during his minority the three persons appointed to act as Regents will receive an annual salary of £400 a year. Kabakas of Uganda will be understood to have attained their majority when they have reached the age of 18 years. The Kabaka of Uganda shall be entitled to a salute of nine guns on ceremonial occasions when such salutes are customary.

7. The Namasole, or mother of the present Kabaka. (Chua), shall be paid during her lifetime an allowance at the rate of £50 a year. This allowance shall not necessarily be continued to the mothers of other Kabakas.

8. All cases, civil or criminal, of a mixed nature, where natives of the Uganda province and non-natives of that province are concerned, shall be subject to British Courts of Justice only.

9. For purposes of native administration the Kingdom of Uganda shall be divided into the following districts or administrative counties:

(1) Kiagwe	(6) Buyaga	(11) Butambala (Bweya)	(16) Ssesse
(2) Bugerere	(7) Bwekula	(12) Kiadondo	(17) Buddu
(3) Bulemezi	(8) Singo	(13) Busiro	(18) Koki
(4) Buruli	(9) Busuju	(14) Mawokota	(19) Mawogola
(5) Bugangadzi	(10) Gomba (Butunzi)	(15) Buvuma	(20) Kabula

At the head of each county shall be placed a chief who shall be selected by the Kabaka's Government, but whose name shall be submitted for approval to Her Majesty's representative. This chief, when approved by Her Majesty's representative, shall be guaranteed from out of the revenue of Uganda a salary at the rate of £200 a year. To the chief of a county will be entrusted by Her Majesty's Government, and by the Kabaka, the task of administering justice among the natives dwelling in his county, the assessment and collection of taxes, the upkeep of the main roads, and the general supervision of native affairs. On all questions but the assessment and collection of taxes the chief of the county will report direct to the King's native ministers, from whom he will receive his instructions. When arrangements have been made by Her Majesty's Government for the organization of a police force in the province of Uganda, a certain number of police will be placed at the disposal of each chief of a county to assist him in maintaining order. For the assessment and payment of taxes, the chief of a county shall be immediately responsible to Her Majesty's representative, and should he fail in his duties in this respect. Her Majesty's representative shall have the right to call upon the Kabaka to dismiss him from his duties and appoint another chief in his stead. In each county an estate, not exceeding an area of 8 square miles, shall be attributed to the chieftainship of a county, and its usufruct shall be enjoyed by the person occupying, for the time being, the position of chief of the county.

10. To assist the Kabaka of Uganda in the government of his people he shall be allowed to appoint three native Officers of State, with the sanction and approval of Her Majesty's representative in Uganda (without whose sanction such appointments shall

not be valid)-a Prime Minister, otherwise known as Katikiro; a Chief Justice; and a Treasurer or Controller of the Kabaka's revenues. These officials shall be paid at the rate of £300 a year. Their salaries shall be guaranteed them by Her Majesty's Government from out of the funds of the Uganda Protectorate. During the minority of the Kabaka these three officials shall be constituted the Regents, and when acting in that capacity shall receive salary at the rate of £400 a year. Her Majesty's chief representative in Uganda shall at any time have direct access to the Kabaka, and shall have the power of discussing matters affecting Uganda with the Kabaka alone or, during his minority, with the Regents, but ordinarily the three officials above designated will transact most of the Kabaka's business with the Uganda Administration. The Katikiro shall be ex officio the President of the Lukiko, or native council; the Vice-President of the Lukiko shall be the native Minister of Justice for the time being; in the absence of both Prime Minister and Minister of Justice, the Treasurer of the Kabaka's revenues, or third minister, shall preside over the meetings of the Lukiko.

11. The Lukiko, or native council, shall be constituted as follows: 'In addition to the three native ministers who shall be ex officio senior members of the council, each chief of a county (twelve in all) shall be ex officio a member of the Council. Also each chief of a county shall be permitted to appoint a person to act as his lieutenant in this respect to attend the meetings of the council during his absence, and to speak and vote in his name. The chief of a county, however, and his lieutenant may not both appear simultaneously at the council. In addition, the Kabaka shall select from each county three notables, whom he shall appoint during his pleasure, to be members of the Lukiko or native council. The Kabaka may at any time deprive any individual of the right to sit on the native council, but in such a case shall intimate his intention to Her Majesty's representative in Uganda, and receive his assent thereto before dismissing the member. The functions of the council will be to discuss all matters concerning the native administration of Uganda, and to forward to the Kabaka resolutions which may be voted by a majority regarding measures to be adopted by the said administration. The Kabaka shall further consult with Her Majesty's representative in Uganda before giving effect to any such resolutions voted by the native council, and shall, in this matter, explicitly follow the advice of Her Majesty's representative. The Lukiko, or a committee thereof, shall be a Court of Appeal from the decisions of the Courts of the First Instances held by the chiefs of counties. In all cases affecting property exceeding the value of £5, or imprisonment exceeding one week, an appeal for revision may be addressed to the Lukiko. In all cases involving property or claims exceeding £100 in value, or a sentence of imprisonment exceeding five years, or sentences of death, the Lukiko shall refer the matter to the consideration of the Kabaka, whose decision when countersigned by Her Majesty's chief representative in Uganda shall be final. The Lukiko shall not decide any questions affecting the persons or property of Europeans or others who are not natives of Uganda. No person may be elected to the Lukiko who is not a native of the Kingdom of Uganda. No question of religious opinion shall be taken into consideration in regard to the appointment by the Kabaka of members of the council. In this matter he shall use his judgement and abide by the advice of Her Majesty's representative, assuring in this manner a fair proportionate representation of all recognised expressions of religious belief prevailing in Uganda.

12. In order to contribute to a reasonable extent towards the general cost of the maintenance of the Uganda Protectorate, there shall be established the following taxation for Imperial purposes, that is to say, the proceeds of the collection of these taxes shall be handed over intact to Her Majesty's representative in Uganda as the contribution of the Uganda province towards the general revenue of the Protectorate. The taxes agreed upon at present shall be the following:

(a) A hut tax of three rupees, or 4s. per annum, on any house, hut or habitation used as a dwelling-place.

(b) A gun tax of three rupees, or 4s. per annum, to be paid by any person who possesses or uses a gun, rifle or pistol.

The Kingdom of Uganda shall be subject to the same Customs Regulations, Porter Regulations, and so forth, which may, with the approval of Her Majesty, be instituted for the Uganda Protectorate generally, which may be described in a sense as exterior taxation, but no further interior taxation, other than the hut tax, shall be imposed on the natives of the province of Uganda without [the agreement of the Kabaka, who in this matter shall be guided by the majority of votes in his native council. This arrangement, however, will not affect the question of township rates, lighting rates, water rates, market dues, and so forth, which may be treated apart as matters affecting municipalities or townships; nor will it absolve natives from obligations as regards military service, or the up-keep of main roads passing through the lands on which they dwell. A hut tax shall be levied on any building which is used as a dwelling-place. A collection of not more than four huts, however, which are in a separate and single enclosure and are inhabited only by a man and his wife, or wives, may be counted as one hut. The following buildings will be exempted from the hut tax: temporary shelters erected in the fields for the purposes of watching plantations; or rest houses erected by the roadside for passing travellers; buildings used solely as tombs, churches, mosques or schools, and not slept in or occupied as a dwelling; the residence of the Kabaka and his household (not to exceed fifty buildings in number); the residence of the Namasole, or Queen Mother (not to exceed twenty in number); the official residences of the three native ministers, and of all the chiefs of counties (not to exceed ten buildings in number); but in the case of dispute as to the liability of a building to pay hut tax, the matter must be referred to the collector for the province of Uganda, whose decision must be final. The collector of a province may also authorize the chief of a county to exempt from taxation any person whose condition of destitution may, in the opinion of the collector, make payment of such tax an impossibility. By collector is meant the principal British official representing the Uganda Administration in the province of Uganda. The representative of Her Majesty's Government in the Uganda Protectorate may from time to time direct that in the absence of current coin, a hut or gun tax may be paid in produce or in labour according to a scale which shall be laid down by the said representative. As regards the gun tax, it will be held to apply to any person who possesses or makes use of a gun, rifle, pistol, or any weapon discharging a projectile by the aid of gunpowder, dynamite or compressed air.

The possession of any cannon or machine gun is hereby forbidden to any native of Uganda. A native who pays a gun tax may possess or use as many as five guns. For every five or for every additional gun up to five, which he may be allowed to possess or use, he will have to pay another tax. Exemptions from the gun tax will, however, be

allowed to the following extent: The Kabaka will be credited with fifty gun licences free, by which he may arm as many as fifty of his household. The Queen mother will, in like manner, be granted ten free licences annually, by which she may arm as many as ten persons of her household; each of the three native ministers (Katikiro, Native Chief Justice, and Treasurer of the Kabaka's revenue) shall be granted twenty free gun licences annually, by which they may severally arm twenty persons of their household. Chiefs of counties will be similarly granted ten annual free gun licences; all other members of the Lukiko or native council, not Chiefs of counties, three annual gun licences, and all landed proprietors in the county, with estates exceeding 500 acres in extent, one free annual gun licence.

13. Nothing in this Agreement shall be held to invalidate the preexisting right of the Kabaka of Uganda to call upon every able-bodied male among his subjects for military service in defence of the country; but the Kabaka henceforth will only exercise this right of conscription, or of levying native troops, under the advice of Her Majesty's principal representative in the Protectorate. In times of peace, the armed forces, organized by the Uganda Administration, will probably be sufficient for all purposes of defence, but if Her Majesty's representative is of opinion that the force of Uganda should be strengthened at any time, he may call upon the Kabaka to exercise in a full or in a modified degree his claim on the Baganda people for military service. In such an event the arming and equipping of such force would be undertaken by the administration of the Uganda Protectorate.

14. All main public roads traversing the Kingdom of Uganda and all roads the making of which shall at any time be decreed by the native council with the assent of Her Majesty's representative, shall be maintained in good repair by the chief of the Saza (or county) through which the road runs. The chief of a county shall have the right to call upon each native town, village, or commune, to furnish labourers in the proportion of one to every three huts or houses, to assist in keeping the established roads in repair, provided that no labourers shall be called upon to work on the roads for more than one month in each year. Europeans and all foreigners whose lands abut on established main roads, will be assessed by the Uganda Administration and required to furnish either labour or to pay a labour rate in money as their contribution towards the maintenance of the highways. When circumstances permit, the Uganda Administration may further make grants from out of its Public Works Department, for the construction of new roads or any special repairs to existing highways, of an unusually expensive character.

15. The land of the Kingdom of Uganda shall be dealt with in the following manner: Assuming the area of the Kingdom of Uganda, as comprised within the limits cited in this agreement, to amount square miles, it shall be divided in the following proportions:

	Square Miles
Forests to be brought under control of the Uganda Administration	1,5000

Waste and uncultivated land to be vested in Her Majesty's Government, and to be controlled by the Uganda Administration	9,000
Plantations and other private property of His Highness the Kabaka of Uganda	350
Plantations and other private property of the Namasole (Note.-If the present Kabaka died and another Namasole were appointed, the existing one would be permitted to retain as her personal property 6 square miles, passing on 10 square miles as the endowment of every succeeding Namasole.)	
Plantations and other private property of the Namasole, Mother of Mwanga; 10. To the Princes; Joseph, Augustine, Rarnazan, and Yusufu-Suna, 8 square miles each	32
For the Princesses, sisters, and relations of the Kabaka	90
To the Abamasaza (chiefs of counties), twenty in all 8 square miles each (private property): 160. Official estates attached to the posts of the Abamasaza, 8 square miles each: 160	320
The three Regents will receive private property to the extent of 16 square miles each: 48. And official property attached to their office, 16 square miles each, the said official property to be afterwards attached to the posts of the three native ministers: 48	96
Mbogo (the Muhammedan chief) will receive for himself and his adherents	24
Kamswaga, chief of Koki, will receive	20
One thousand chiefs and private landowners will receive the estates of which they are already in possession, and which are computed at an acreage of 8 square miles per individual, making a total of	8,000
There will be allotted to the three missionary societies in existence in Uganda as private property, and in trust for the native churches, as much as	92
Land taken up the Government for Government stations prior to the present settlement (at Kampala, Entebbe, Masaka, etc., etc.)	50
Total	19,600

After a careful survey of the Kingdom of Uganda has been made, if the total area should be found to be less than 19,600, then that portion of the country which is to be vested in Her Majesty's Government shall be reduced in extent by the deficiency found to exist in the estimated area. Should, however, the area of Uganda be established at more than 19,600 square miles, then the surplus shall be dealt with as follows:

(i) It shall be divided into two parts, one-half shall be added to the amount of land which is vested in Her Majesty's Government, and the other half will be divided proportionately among the properties of the Kabaka, the three Regents or native ministers, and the Abamasaza, or chiefs of counties.

(ii) The aforesaid 9,000 square miles of waste or cultivated, or uncultivated land, or land occupied without prior gift of the Kabaka or chiefs by bakopi or strangers, are hereby vested in Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India, and Protectress of Uganda, on the understanding that the revenue derived from such lands shall form part of the general revenue of the Uganda Protectorate.

(iii) The forests, which will be reserved for Government control, will be, as a rule, those forests over which no private claim can be raised justifiably, and will be forests of some continuity, which should be maintained as woodland in the general interests of the country.

(iv) As regards the allotment of the 8,000 square miles among the 1,000 private landowners, this will be a matter to be left to the decision of the Lukiko, with an appeal to the Kabaka. The Lukiko will be empowered to decide as to the validity of claims, the number of claimants and the extent of land granted, premising that the total amount of land thus allotted amongst the chiefs and accorded to native landowners of the country is not to exceed 8,000 square miles.

(v) Europeans and non-natives, who have acquired estates, and whose claims thereto have been admitted by the Uganda Administration, will receive title-deeds for such estates in such manner and with such limitations, as may be formulated by Her Majesty's representative. The official estates granted to the Regents, native ministers, or chiefs of counties, are to pass with the office, and their use is only to be enjoyed by the holders of the office.

(vi) Her Majesty's Government, however, reserves to itself the right to carry through or construct roads, railways, canals, telegraphs or other useful public works, or to build military forts or works of defence on any property, public or private, with the condition that not more than 10 per centum of the property in question shall be taken up for these purposes without compensation, and that compensation shall be given for the disturbance of growing crops or of buildings.

16. Until Her Majesty's Government has seen fit to devise and promulgate forestry regulations, it is not possible in this Agreement to define such forests rights as may be given to the natives of Uganda; but it is agreed on behalf of Her Majesty's Government, that in arranging these forestry regulations, the claims of the Baganda people to obtain timber for building purposes, firewood, and other products of the forests or uncultivated lands, shall be taken into account, and arrangements made by which under due safeguards against abuse these rights may be exercised gratis.

17. As regards mineral rights. The rights to all minerals found on private estates shall be considered to belong only to the owners of these estates, subject to a 10 per centum ad valorem duty, which shall be paid to the Uganda Administration when the minerals are worked. On the land outside private estates, the mineral rights shall belong to the

Uganda Administration, which, however, in return for using or disposing of the same must compensate the occupier of the soil for the disturbance of growing crops or buildings, and will be held liable to allot to him from out of the spare lands in the Protectorate an equal area of soil to that from which he has been removed. On these waste and uncultivated lands of the Protectorate, the mineral rights shall be vested in Her Majesty's Government as represented by the Uganda Administration. In like manner the ownership of the forests, which are not included within the limits of private properties, shall be henceforth vested in Her Majesty's Government.

18 In return for the cession to Her Majesty's Government of the right of control over 10,550 square miles of waste, cultivated, uncultivated, or forest lands, there shall be paid by Her Majesty's Government in trust for the Kabaka (upon his attaining his majority) a sum of £500, and to the three Regents collectively, £600, namely, to the Katikiro £300, and the other two Regents £150 each.

19. Her Majesty's Government agrees to pay to the Muhammedan Uganda Chief, Mbogo, a pension for life of £250 a year, on the understanding that all rights which he may claim (except such as are guaranteed in the foregoing clauses) are ceded to Her Majesty's Government.

20. Should the Kingdom of Uganda fail to pay to the Uganda Administration during the first two years after the signing of this Agreement, an amount of native taxation, equal to half that which is due in proportion to the number of inhabitants; or should it at any time fail to pay without just cause or excuse, the aforesaid minimum of taxation due in proportion to the population, or should the Kabaka, Chiefs, or people of Uganda pursue, at any time, a policy which is distinctly disloyal to the British Protectorate: Her Majesty's Government will no longer consider themselves bound by the terms of this Agreement.

On the other hand, should the revenue derived from the hut and gun tax exceed two years running a total value of £45,000 a year, the Kabaka and chiefs of counties shall have the right to appeal to Her Majesty's Government for an increase in the subsidy given to the Kabaka, and the stipends given to the native ministers and chiefs, such increase to be in the same proportional relation as the increase in the revenue derived from the taxation of the natives.

21. Throughout this Agreement the phrase 'Uganda Administration' shall be taken to mean that general government of the Uganda Protectorate, which is instituted and maintained by Her Majesty's Government; 'Her Majesty's representative' shall mean the Commissioner, High Commissioner, Governor, or principal official of any designation who is appointed by Her Majesty's Government to direct the affairs of Uganda.

22. In the interpretation of this Agreement the English text shall be the version which is binding on both parties.

Done in English and Luganda at Mengo, in the Kingdom of Uganda, on the 10th March, 1900.

H. H. JOHNSTON, Her Majesty's Special Commissioner. Commander-in-Chief and Consul-General, on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India.

APOLLO, Katikiro, Regent.

MUGWANYA, Katikiro, Regent.

MBOGO NOHO, his X mark.

ZAKARIA KIZITO, Kangawo, Regent.

SEBAUA, Pokino.

YAKOBO, Kago.

PAULO, Mukwenda.

KAMSWAGA, of Koki, his X mark.

(On behalf of the Kabaka, Chiefs, and people of Uganda.) Witness to the above signatures:

F. J. Jackson, Her Majesty's Vice-Consul.

J. Evatt, Lieutenant-Colonel.

James Francis Cunningham.

Alfred R. Tucker, Bishop of Uganda.

Henry Hanlon, Vicar Apostolic of the Upper Nile.

E. Bresson (for Mgr. Streicher, White Fathers).

R. H. Walker.

Matayo, Mujasi.

Latusa, Sekibobo.

Matayo, Kaima.

Yokana, Kitunzi

Santi Semindi, Kasuju.

Anderea, Kimbugwe.

Coprien Luwekula.

Nova, Jumba Gabunga.

Ferindi, Kyambalango.

Saulo, Lumana.

Yokano Bunjo, Katikiro of Namasole.

Yosefu, Katambalwa.

Zakayo, Kivate.

Hezikaya, Namutwe.

Ali. Mwenda, his X mark.

Nselwano, Muwemba.

Sernioni Sebuta, Mutengesa.

Njovu Yusufu, Kitambala, his X mark.

Kata, Nsege.

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